OLD WESTBURY LIBRARY

EX LIBRIS
NEW YORK INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY



OLD WESTBURY LIBRARY


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

https://archive.org/details/lettersofemilydi0002unse_n7h2

THE LETTERS OF EMILY DICKINSON

VOLUME II

THE LETTERS OF

Emily Dickinson

Edited by

THOMAS H. JOHNSON

Associate Editor

THEODORA WARD

64634



THE BELKNAP PRESS
of HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, Massachusetts
1965

WESTPORT LIBRARY
PS 1541
.Z5A3
1958
v.2
c.1

© Copyright, 1958, by the President and Fellows of Harvard College

© Copyright, 1914, 1924, 1932, by Martha Dickinson Bianchi

Distributed in Great Britain by Oxford University Press, London

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 58–5594

Second Printing



Designed by Burton J Jones, Jr.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Bound by Stanhope Bindery, Inc., Boston, Massachusetts

CONTENTS

v *"To live, and die, and mount*
again in triumphant body . . .
is no schoolboy's theme!"
LETTERS 177–186 [1855–1857] 313

VI *"Much has occurred . . . so much —*
that I stagger as I write, in
its sharp remembrance."
LETTERS 187–245 [1858–1861] 331

VII *"Perhaps you smile at me.*
I could not stop for that —
My Business is Circumference."
LETTERS 246–313 [1862–1865] 387

VIII *"A Letter always feels to me*
like immortality because it is
the mind alone without corporeal friend."
LETTERS 314–337 [1866–1869] 447

IX *"I find ecstasy in living —*
the mere sense of living
is joy enough."
LETTERS 338–431 [1870–1874] 467

X *"Nature is a Haunted House —*
but Art – a House that tries to be haunted."
LETTERS 432–626 [1875–1879] 535

ILLUSTRATIONS

Following page 534

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, about 1870. [*Harvard University Archives.*]

Helen Hunt Jackson. [*Harvard University Archives.*]

The Reverend Jonathan L. Jenkins. [*Houghton Library.*]

Samuel Bowles, about 1875. [*Houghton Library.*]

Samuel Bowles with friends in California, 1865. [*Houghton Library.*]

Following page 582

Facsimiles of letters showing Emily Dickinson's handwriting:

1842. Letter 1. [*Houghton Library.*]

1861. Letter 232. [*Houghton Library.*]

1869. Letter 330. [*Boston Public Library.*]

1881. Letter 711. [*Houghton Library.*]

V

LETTERS

177–186

[1855–1857]

"To live, and die, and mount
again in triumphant body . . .
is no schoolboy's theme!"

[1855–1857]

The substantial exchange of letters between Austin and Emily Dickinson came abruptly to an end when he returned to Amherst from law school and settled into the practice of law there for the rest of his life. Her correspondence with Susan Gilbert necessarily altered its character after Susan's marriage to Austin in July 1856.

The most important event in these years for the family occurred when, after Deacon David Mack died in September 1854, the Dickinson homestead on Main Street came onto the market. Mack had purchased it in 1833, and Edward Dickinson bought it back in April 1855. The family moved into it in November. The other event in that year of particular significance to Emily was her trip to Washington and her return stopover in Philadelphia, where probably she met the Reverend Charles Wadsworth, though the import of the meeting came later.

The few surviving letters of 1855 and 1856 merely hint at the changes taking place within her. No poem or letter can certainly be placed in the year 1857, and one trivial event only can be associated with it. In October 1856 she had won second prize at the Cattle Show for her rye and indian bread, and the Hampshire and Franklin Express, *on 27 August 1857, announced her name as one of the members of the Cattle Show committee for that year who would act as judges of the Rye and Indian Bread display.*

Perhaps in a desultory manner she was trying to write poetry. Whatever was happening, the inner forces shaping her destiny are hinted at in her recurrently expressed speculations on the theme of immortality.

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson) *late January 1855*

I am sick today, dear Susie, and have not been to church. There has been a pleasant quiet, in which to think of you, and I have not been sick eno' that I cannot write to you. I love you as dearly, Susie, as when love first began, on the step at the front door, and under the Evergreens, and it breaks my heart sometimes, because I do not hear from you. I wrote you many days ago — I wont say many *weeks*, because it will look sadder so, and then I cannot write — but Susie, it troubles me.

I miss you, mourn for you, and walk the Streets alone — often at night, beside, I fall asleep in tears, for your dear face, yet not one word comes back to me from that silent West. If it is finished, tell me, and I will raise the lid to my box of Phantoms, and lay one more love in; but if it *lives* and *beats* still, still lives and beats for *me*, then say me *so*, and I will strike the strings to one more strain of happiness before I die. Why Susie — think of it — you are my precious Sister, and will be till you die, and will be still, when Austin and Vinnie and Mat, and you and I are marble — and life has forgotten us!

Vinnie and I are going soon — either this week or next — father has not determined. I'm sure I cannot go, when I think that you are coming, and I would give the whole world if I could stay, instead.

I cant believe you are coming — but when I think of it, and tell myself it's so, a wondrous joy comes over me, and my old fashioned life capers as in a dream. Sue — I take the words of that Sweet Kate Scott, I have never seen — and say "it is too blissful." I never will be "so busy" when you get back to me, as I used to be. I'll get "my spinning done," for Susie, it steals over me once in a little while, that as my fingers fly and I am so busy, a far more wondrous Shuttle shifts the subtler thread, and when *that's* web is spun, *indeed my* spinning will be done. I think with you, dear Susie, and Mat by me again, I shall be still for joy. I shall not fret or murmur — shall not care when the wind blows, shall not observe the storm — "Such, and so precious" are you.

Austin told me about you when he came from the West — though many little things I wanted most to know, he "had not noticed." I asked him how you looked, and what you wore, and how your hair

was fixed, and what you said of me — his answers were quite limited — "you looked as you always did — he did'nt know what you wore — never did know what people wore — you said he must tell me *everything*," which by the way dear Child, he has not done to this day, and any portion of which, I would savour with joy, might I but obtain it. Vinnie inquired with promptness "if you wore a Basque" — "it seemed to him," he said, "you *did* have on a *black thing*."

Ah Susie — you must train him — 'twill take full many a lesson in the fashion plate, before he will respect, and speak with proper deference of this majestic garment. I have some new clothes, Susie — presume I shall appear like an embarrassed Peacock, quite unused to its plumes. Dear Susie — you will write to me when I am gone from home —

Affy, Emilie —

I asked Austin if he had any messages — he replied he — had not! The good for nothing fellow! I presume he will fill a fools Cap with protestations to you, as soon as I leave the room! Bats think Foxes have no eyes — Ha Ha!! Mother and Vinnie send much love — they will be delighted to see you. My dearest love to Mat.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 1). Ink. Dated: Sabbath Day.

PUBLICATION: *LL* 33–34, in small part; *FF* 200–202, in part.

After Austin returned from his western trip, both sisters prepared to join their father in Washington. His name is in the *Washington Evening Star*, on January 11, as a recent arrival at Willard's Hotel, but no other members of the family are mentioned. Susan and Martha Gilbert planned to return to Amherst from Michigan early in February. See the note to letter no. 186.

178

To Susan Gilbert (Dickinson) *Washington, 28 February 1855*

Sweet and soft as summer, Darlings, maple trees in bloom and grass green in the sunny places — hardly seems it possible this is winter still; and it makes the grass spring in this heart of mine and each linnet sing, to think that you have come.

Dear Children — Mattie — Sue — for one look at you, for your gen-

tle voices, I'd exchange it all. The pomp — the court — the etiquette — they are of the earth — will not enter Heaven.

Will you write to me — why hav'nt you before? I feel so tired looking for you, and still you do not come. And you love me, come soon — this is *not* forever, you know, this mortal life of our's. Which had you rather I wrote you — what I am doing here, or who I am loving *there*?

Perhaps I'll tell you both, but the "last shall be first, and the first last." I'm loving you at home — I'm coming every hour to your chamber door. I'm thinking when awake, how sweet if you were with me, and to talk with you as I fall asleep, would be sweeter still.

I think I cannot wait, when I remember you, and that is *always*, Children. I shall love you more for this sacrifice.

Last night I heard from Austin — and I think he fancies we are losing sight of the things at home — Tell him "not so," Children — Austin is mistaken. He says we forget "the Horse, the Cats, and the geraniums" — have not remembered Pat — proposes to sell the farm and move west with mother — to make boquets of my plants, and send them to his friends — to come to Washington in his Dressing gown and mortify me and Vinnie. Should be delighted to see him, even in "dishabille," and will promise to *notice* him whenever he will come. The *cats* I will confess, have not so absorbed my attention as they are apt at home, yet do I still remember them with tender emotion; and as for my sweet flowers, I shall know each leaf and every bud that bursts, while I am from home. Tell Austin, never fear! My thoughts are far from idle, concerning e'en the *trifles* of the world at home, but all is jostle, here — scramble and confusion, and sometimes in writing home I cant stop for detail, much as I would love. Vinnie met the other evening, in the parlor here a certain Mr Saxton, who inquired of her for his Amherst cousins. Vinnie told him joyfully, all she knew of you, and another evening, took me down to him. We walked in the hall a long while, talking of you, my Children, vieing with each other in compliment to those we loved so well. I told him of you both, he seemed very happy to hear so much of you. He left Washington yesterday morning. I have not been well since I came here, and that has excused me from some gaieties, tho' at that, I'm gayer than I was before. Vinnie is asleep this morning — she has been out walking with some ladies here and is very tired. She says much of you — wants so much to see you. Give my love to your sister — Kiss Dwightie for me —

my love for Abbie and Eme, when you see them, and for dear Mr & Mrs Dwight – Tell Mother and Austin they need'nt flatter themselves we are forgetting them – they'll find themselves much mistaken before long. We think we shall go to Philadelphia next week, tho' father has'nt decided. Eliza writes most every day, and seems impatient for us. I dont know how long we shall stay there, nor how long in New York. Father has not de[ci]ded. Shant you write, when this gets to you?

Affy – E –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 14). Ink. Dated: Wednesday morning. Envelope addressed: Miss Susan H. Gilbert./Amherst./Mass. Franked: Edw. Dickinson M.C.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 202–205, in part.

The sisters stayed in Washington with their father from the middle of February until early March, and visited the Colemans in Philadelphia on the way home. Aside from this letter and the one that follows, hitherto associated with the spring of 1854, the only record of the weeks spent in Washington is the inscription in Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, *The Last Leaf from Sunnyside*, given to the girls by Mrs. James Brown, and dated "February 19, 1855, Washington." The book is in the Jones Library, Amherst, Massachusetts. "J. Brown & Lady" from Alabama are recorded as arrivals at Willard's Hotel on February 5. Susan and Martha Gilbert arrived at Amherst on February 10. "Little Dwightie" was the youngest child of their sister Harriet, Mrs. William Cutler, with whom they now lived. For evidence that ED was not in Washington in the spring of 1854, see the note accompanying letter no. 157. See Appendix 1: Eastman.

179

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *Philadelphia, 18 March 1855*

Dear Mrs. Holland and Minnie, and Dr. Holland too – I have stolen away from company to write a note to you; and to say that I love you still.

I am not at home – I have been away just five weeks today, and shall not go quite yet back to Massachusetts. Vinnie is with me here, and we have wandered together into many new ways.

We were three weeks in Washington, while father was there, and

have been two in Philadelphia. We have had many pleasant times, and seen much that is fair, and heard much that is wonderful — many sweet ladies and noble gentlemen have taken us by the hand and smiled upon us pleasantly — and the sun shines brighter for our way thus far.

I will not tell you what I saw — the elegance, the grandeur; you will not care to know the value of the diamonds my Lord and Lady wore, but if you haven't been to the sweet Mount Vernon, then I *will* tell you how on one soft spring day we glided down the Potomac in a painted boat, and jumped upon the shore — how hand in hand we stole along up a tangled pathway till we reached the tomb of General George Washington, how we paused beside it, and no one spoke a word, then hand in hand, walked on again, not less wise or sad for that marble story; how we went within the door — raised the latch he lifted when he last went home — thank the Ones in Light that he's since passed in through a brighter wicket! Oh, I could spend a long day, if it did not weary you, telling of Mount Vernon — and I will sometime if we live and meet again, and God grant we shall!

I wonder if you have all forgotten us, we have stayed away so long. I hope you haven't — I tried to write so hard before I went from home, but the moments were so busy, and then they *flew* so. I was sure when days *did* come in which I was less busy, I should seek your forgiveness, and it did not occur to me that you might not forgive me. Am I too late today? Even if you are angry, I shall keep praying you, till from very weariness, you will take me in. It seems to me many a day since we were in Springfield, and Minnie and the *dumb-bells* seem as vague — as vague; and sometimes I wonder if I ever dreamed — then if I'm dreaming now, then if I *always* dreamed, and there is not a world, and not these darling friends, for whom I would not count my life too great a sacrifice. Thank God there is a world, and that the friends we love dwell forever and ever in a house above. I fear I grow incongruous, but to meet my friends does delight me so that I quite forget time and sense and so forth.

Now, my precious friends, if you won't forget me until I get home, and become more sensible, I will write again, and more properly. Why didn't I ask before, if you were well and happy?

Forgetful

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 162–164; *LL* 190–191; *L* (1931) 160–161; *LH* 40–42, dated (presumably by ED): Philadelphia.

Congress adjourned on Sunday, March 4, and Edward Dickinson arrived home presumably on Wednesday. (On Tuesday, March 6, Susan Gilbert wrote her brother Dwight, mentioning Mr. Dickinson and saying: "I suppose he will be home Wednesday." HCL – Dickinson collection). One conjectures that the girls left Washington with their father, who saw them met in Philadelphia, then continued on home. They remained as guests in Philadelphia of Mr. and Mrs. Coleman and their daughter Eliza, an early friend of ED's. The Colemans were members of the Arch Street Presbyterian Church, of which the Reverend Charles Wadsworth was the pastor.

180

To Jane Humphrey — *16 October 1855*

I'm just from the frosts, Jennie, and my cheeks are ruddy and cold – I have many a Bairn that cannot care for itself, so I must needs care *for* it, on such a night as this, and I've shrouded little forms and muffled little faces, till I almost feel maternal, and wear the anxious aspect that careful parents do – but for you I leave them, Darling, dearer than leaves or blossoms, or all my speechless mates, wh' will fade at last –

Jennie – my Jennie Humphrey – I love you well tonight, and for a beam from your brown eyes, I would give a pearl.

How much I would buy, were they to purchase, but Jennie, I am *poor*. Only the loss of friends and the longing for them – that's all, tonight Jennie, and I keep thinking and wishing, and then I think and wish, till for your sakes, who stray from me, *tears* patter as the rain.

How I wish you were mine, as you once were, when I had you in the morning, and when the sun went down, and was sure I should never go to sleep without a moment from you. I try to prize it, Jennie, when the loved are here, try to love *more*, and *faster*, and *dearer*, but when all are gone, seems as had I tried *harder*, they would have stayed with me. Let us love with all our might, Jennie, for who knows where our hearts go, when this world is done?

Do you love to be in Groton, and are you happy and well, and is Mr Hammond kind to you? I am sure he is, for I like Mr Hammond.

Will you teach always, Jennie, or in a Seminary *smaller*, one day assume the rule?

You did not tell me of *yourself* when you were in Amherst, so how many knights are slain and wounded, and how many now remain, is to me unknown. Keep a list of the conquests, Jennie, this is an *enemy's* Land!

Mr Bliss' *Coronation* takes place tomorrow, at the College church. Charge to the Heathen, by the Pastor! Front seats reserved for Foreign Lands! Jennie – dont let your duty call you "far hence." Distances *here* seem pretty long, but I confess, when it gets to that, that one crosses the Mediterranean, tis even *farther* off, nor can car, nor can carriage take me. Vinnie sends her love, and says "tell Jennie Humphrey I *do* want to see her.["]

No day goes by, little One, but has its thought of you, and its wish to see you. When shall you come again? We shall be in our new house soon; they are papering now, and – Jennie, we have *other* home – "house not made with hands." Which first will we occupy? Jennie – give Mr Hammond a bright smile from me, and tell him it is Autumn – and tell him I have nuts and squirrels, and gold and scarlet trees – and tell him here is the *king*! My love for you, my Child, and will you write me instantly?

Your Emilie Dickinson –

Manuscript: Rosenbach 1170/17 (5). Ink. Dated: Wednesday Evening. Addressed: Miss Jane Humphrey/care Charles Hammond Esq./ Groton/Mass. Franked: E. Dickinson M C. Postmarked: Amherst Ms. Oct 18. Unpublished.

Jane Humphrey had returned from Ohio, and after a visit in Amherst was teaching at Groton. The Reverend Charles Hammond, who had a statewide reputation as an educator, was at this time principal of Groton Academy. He had earlier been connected with Monson Academy, both as student and teacher, and ED's acquaintance with him was probably made through her Monson family connections. The ordination of Daniel Bliss took place on 17 October. The Dickinson homestead, built in 1813 by Samuel Fowler Dickinson, had been bought in 1833 by Deacon David Mack when S. F. Dickinson had been compelled by financial reverses to sell it. Edward Dickinson and his family continued to live in part of it

until the spring of 1840, when he bought a house on North Pleasant Street and moved into it. Shortly after Mack died in September 1854, the house came onto the market and Edward Dickinson purchased it in April 1855. After extensive remodeling, the house was almost ready for occupancy when this letter was written. The move was actually made in November. This is ED's last known letter to Jane Humphrey.

The scripture quotation in the last paragraph is from 2 Corinthians 5.1 (see letters 182, 458, and 866).

181

To Dr. J. G. Holland — *3? November 1855*

I come in flakes, dear Dr. Holland, for verily it snows, and as descending swans, here a pinion and there a pinion, and anon a plume, come the bright inhabitants of the white home.

I know they fall in Springfield; perhaps you see them now — and therefore I look out again, to see if you are looking.

How pleasant it seemed to hear your voice — so said Vinnie and I, as we as individuals, and then collectively, read your brief note. Why didn't you speak to us before? We thought you had forgotten us — we concluded that one of the bright things had gone forever more. That is a sober feeling, and it mustn't come too often in such a world as this. A violet came up next day, and blossomed in our garden, and were it not for these same flakes, I would go in the dark and get it, so to send to you. Thank Him who is in Heaven, Katie Holland lives! Kiss her on every cheek for me — I really can't remember how many the bairn has — and give my warmest recollection to Mrs. Holland and Minnie, whom to love, this Saturday night, is no trifling thing, I'm very happy that you are happy — and that you cheat the angels of another one.

I would the many households clad in dark attire had succeeded so. You must all be happy and strong and well. I love to have the lamps shine on your evening table. I love to have the sun shine on your daily walks.

The "new house!" God bless it! You will leave the "maiden and married life of Mary Powell" behind.

Love and remember

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 164–165; *LL* 193; *L* (1931) 161–162; *LH* 44–45, dated (presumably by ED): Saturday Eve.

On 17 October 1855 Dr. Holland inserted an advertisement in the *Springfield Republican* offering his present house for sale. This letter answers one from him which evidently comments on his new house. Little Kate, the Hollands's second child, has just recovered from a serious illness. (Mrs. Holland, in writing to Mrs. Todd in 1893, when the latter was preparing the letters for publication [AB 193], stated that Kate's illness was in the summer and autumn of 1854, but since ED's letter brings the two items of news together, it is apparent that Mrs. Holland miscalculated the date.) Ann Manning's *The Maiden and Married Life of Mary Powell* (1852) is described by the publishers as "a nicely drawn and more poetical version" of the story of John Milton's first wife.

182

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *about 20 January 1856*

Your voice is sweet, dear Mrs. Holland — I wish I heard it oftener.

One of the mortal musics Jupiter denies, and when indeed its gentle measures fall upon my ear, I stop the birds to listen. Perhaps you think I *have* no bird, and this is rhetoric — pray, Mr. Whately, what is *that* upon the cherry-tree? Church is done, and the winds blow, and Vinnie is in that pallid land the simple call "sleep." They will be wiser by and by, we shall all be wiser! While I sit in the snows, the summer day on which you came and the bees and the south wind, seem fabulous as *Heaven* seems to a sinful world — and I keep remembering it till it assumes a *spectral* air, and nods and winks at me, and then all of you turn to phantoms and vanish slow away. We cannot talk and laugh more, in the parlor where we met, but we learned to love for aye, there, so it is just as well.

We shall sit in a parlor "not made with hands" unless we are very careful!

I cannot tell you how we moved. I had rather not remember. I believe my "effects" were brought in a bandbox, and the "deathless me," on foot, not many moments after. I took at the time a memorandum of my several senses, and also of my hat and coat, and my best

shoes — but it was lost in the *mêlée*, and I am out with lanterns, looking for myself.

Such wits as I reserved, are so badly shattered that repair is useless — and still I can't help laughing at my own catastrophe. I supposed we were going to make a "transit," as heavenly bodies did — but we came budget by budget, as our fellows do, till we fulfilled the pantomime contained in the word "moved." It is a kind of *gone-to-Kansas* feeling, and if I sat in a long wagon, with my family tied behind, I should suppose without doubt I was a party of emigrants!

They say that "home is where the heart is." I think it is where the *house* is, and the adjacent buildings.

But, my dear Mrs. Holland, I have another story, and lay my laughter all away, so that I can sigh. Mother has been an invalid since we came *home*, and Vinnie and I "regulated," and Vinnie and I "got settled," and still we keep our father's house, and mother lies upon the lounge, or sits in her easy chair. I don't know what her sickness is, for I am but a simple child, and frightened at myself. I often wish I was a grass, or a toddling daisy, whom all these problems of the dust might not terrify — and should my own machinery get slightly out of gear, *please*, kind ladies and gentlemen, some one stop the wheel, — for I know that with belts and bands of gold, I shall whizz triumphant on the new stream! Love for you — love for Dr. Holland — thanks for his exquisite hymn — tears for your sister in sable, and kisses for Minnie and the bairns.

From your mad

Emilie.

Manuscript: missing.

Publication: *L* (1894) 166–168; *LL* 198, in part; *L* (1931) 162–164; *LH* 46–47, dated (presumably by ED): Sabbath Day.

Mrs. Dickinson's illness was a condition that lasted for several years and caused the family much anxiety. Later in 1856 she spent some time at a water cure establishment in Northampton. Dr. Holland's "exquisite hymn" may have been the poem "Things New and Old," published in the *Springfield Republican*, 1 January 1856. Mrs. Holland's sister Sarah lost her husband Otis Knight, January 12. The quotation in the third paragraph is from 2 Corinthians 5. 1: ". . . we have a building of God, an house not made with hands . . ." (see also letters no. 180, 458, and 866).

To Mary Warner (Crowell) *about 20 April 1856*

"I cannot make him dead!
His fair sunshiny head
Is ever bounding round my study chair–
Yet, when my eyes, now dim
With tears, I turn to him–
The vision vanishes–he is not there!

I walk my parlor floor
And, through the open door,
I hear a footfall on the chamber stair–
I'm stepping toward the hall
To give the boy a call–
And then bethink me
That–he is not there–

I thread the crowded street–
A satchelled lad I meet,
With the same beaming eyes, and colored hair–
And, as he's running by,–
Follow him with my eye–
Scarcely believing that–he is not there!

I know his face is hid
Under the coffin lid,
Closed are his eyes; cold is his forehead;
My hand that marble felt–
O'er it in prayer I knelt,
Yet my heart whispers that, he is not there!

I cannot *make* him dead–
When passing by the bed
So long watched over with parental care–
My spirit and my eye
Seek it inquiringly,
Before the tho't comes that, he is not there!

When, at the cool, gray break
Of day, from sleep I wake
With my first breathing of the morning air
My soul goes up, with joy,
To him who gave my boy,–
Then comes the sad tho't, that he is not there!

When at the day's calm close,
Before we seek repose–
I'm with his mother, offering up our prayer–
Whate'er I may be saying,
I am, in spirit, praying
For our boy's spirit, tho', he is not there!

Not there?–Where, then, is he?
The form I used to see
Was but the *raiment* that he used to wear;
The grave–that now doth press
Upon that cast-off dress–
Is but his wardrobe locked, *he* is not there!

He lives!–In all the past
He lives; nor to the last,
Of seeing him again will I despair;
In dreams I see him now–
And, on his angel brow,
I see it written–"thou shalt see me *there*!"

Yes, we all live to God!–
Father, thy chastening rod
So help us, thine afflicted ones to bear,
That, in the spirit land–
Meeting at thy right hand–
'Twill be our heaven to find that–he is *there*!"

Dear Mary–

I send the verses of which I spoke one day–I think them very sweet–I'm sure that you will love them–They make me think beside, of a Little Girl at *your* house, who stole away one morning, and

tho' I cannot find her, I'm sure that she "is there." My love for your mother and Jennie – Love too for you

from Emilie –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 35). Ink.

PUBLICATION: (letter only) *Mount Holyoke Alumnae Quarterly* XXIX (February 1946) 130.

The manuscript is dated in an unknown hand, at the bottom of the last page: April, 1853. On 19 April 1853 Mary Warner's younger sister, Anna Charlotte Warner, died (see letter no. 118). But the handwriting of the letter is that of 1856, not 1853, and the message presumably was sent on the third anniversary of the occasion. The poem, by John Pierpont, was popular in the early forties when it appeared, in several variants, in a number of newspapers and gift books. ED's version is closest to that in *The Sacred Rosary* . . . , compiled by N. P. Willis, New York, 1844.

184

To John L. Graves *late April 1856*

It is Sunday – now – John – and all have gone to church – the wagons have done passing, and I have come out in the new grass to listen to the anthems.

Three or four Hens have followed me, and we sit side by side – and while they crow and whisper, I'll tell you what I see today, and what I would that you saw –

You remember the crumbling wall that divides us from Mr Sweetser – and the crumbling elms and evergreens – and *other* crumbling things – that spring, and fade, and cast their bloom within a simple twelvemonth – well – *they* are *here*, and skies on me fairer far than Italy, in blue eye look down – up – see! – away – a league from here, on the way to Heaven! And here are Robins – just got home – and giddy Crows – and Jays – and will you trust me – as I live, here's a *bumblebee* – not such as *summer* brings – John – earnest, manly bees, but a kind of a Cockney, dressed in jaunty clothes. Much that is gay – have I to show, if you were with me, John, upon this April grass – then there are *sadder* features – here and there, *wings* half gone to dust, that fluttered so, last year – a mouldering plume, an empty house, in which a bird resided. Where last year's flies, their errand ran, and

last year's *crickets fell*! We, too, are flying – fading, John – and the song "here lies," soon upon lips that love us now – will have hummed and ended.

To live, and die, and mount again in triumphant body, and *next* time, try the upper air – is no schoolboy's theme!

It is a jolly thought to think that we can be Eternal – when air and earth are *full* of lives that are gone – and done – and a conceited thing indeed, this promised Resurrection! *Congratulate* me – John – Lad – and "here's a health to *you*" – that we have each a *pair* of lives, and need not chary be, of the one "that *now* is" –

Ha – ha – if any can afford – 'tis *us* a roundelay!

Thank you for your letter, John – Glad I was, to get it – and gladder had I got them *both*, and glad indeed to see – if in your heart, *another* lies, bound one day to me – Mid your momentous cares, pleasant to know that "Lang Syne" has it's own place – that nook and cranny still retain their accustomed guest. And when busier cares, and dustier days, and cobwebs, less unfrequent – shut what *was* away, still, as a ballad hummed, and lost, remember early friend, and drop a tear, if a *troubadour* that strain may chance to sing.

I am glad you have a school to teach – and happy that it is pleasant – amused at the *Clerical Civility* – of your new friends – and shall feel – I know, delight and pride, always, when you succeed. I play the old, odd tunes yet, which used to flit about your head after honest hours – and wake dear Sue, and madden me, with their grief and fun – How far from us, that spring seems – and those triumphant days – Our April got to Heaven *first* – Grant we may meet her there – at the "right hand of the Father." Remember, tho' you rove – John – and those who do *not* ramble will remember you. Susie's, and Mattie's compliments, and Vinnie's just here, and write again if you will –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (G 4). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 401–402.

John Graves had graduated in the previous August and was now serving as principal of Orford Academy, Orford, New Hampshire. He had recently become engaged to Fanny Britton, daughter of one of the founders of the school. The allusion to "our April" is probably in recollection of the time, two years before, when John stayed with Emily and Susan Gilbert at the Dickinson house, while the family was in Washington (see letter no. 157).

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *early August 1856?*

Don't tell, dear Mrs. Holland, but wicked as I am, I read my Bible sometimes, and in it as I read today, I found a verse like this, where friends should "go no more out"; and there were "no tears," and I wished as I sat down to-night that we were *there* — not *here* — and that wonderful world had commenced, which makes such promises, and rather than to write you, I were by your side, and the "hundred and forty and four thousand" were chatting pleasantly, yet not disturbing us. And I'm half tempted to take my seat in that Paradise of which the good man writes, and begin forever and ever *now*, so wondrous does it seem. My only sketch, profile, of Heaven is a large, blue sky, bluer and larger than the *biggest* I have seen in June, and in it are my friends — all of them — every one of them — those who are with me now, and those who were "parted" as we walked, and "snatched up to Heaven."

If roses had not faded, and frosts had never come, and one had not fallen here and there whom I could not waken, there were no need of other Heaven than the one below — and if God had been here this summer, and seen the things that *I* have seen — I guess that He would think His Paradise superfluous. Don't tell Him, for the world, though, for after all He's said about it, I should like to see what He *was* building for us, with no hammer, and no stone, and no journeyman either. Dear Mrs. Holland, I love, to-night — love you and Dr. Holland, and "time and sense" — and fading things, and things that do *not* fade.

I'm so glad you are not a blossom, for those in my garden fade, and then a "reaper whose name is Death" has come to get a few to help him make a bouquet for himself, so I'm glad you are not a rose — and I'm glad you are not a bee, for where they go when summer's done, only the thyme knows, and even were you a robin, when the west winds came, you would coolly wink at me, and away, some morning!

As "little Mrs. Holland," then, I think I love you most, and trust that tiny lady will dwell below while we dwell, and when with many a wonder we seek the new Land, *her* wistful face, *with* ours, shall look the last upon the hills, and first upon — well, *Home!*

Pardon my sanity, Mrs. Holland, in a world *in*sane, and love me

if you will, for I had rather *be* loved than to be called a king in earth, or a lord in Heaven.

Thank you for your sweet note – the clergy are very well. Will bring such fragments from them as shall seem me good. I kiss my paper here for you and Dr. Holland – would it were cheeks instead.

Dearly,

Emilie.

P.S. The bobolinks have gone.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 169–170; *LL* 199–200; *L* (1931) 164–165; *LH* 48–50, dated (presumably by ED): Sabbath Night.

Since the manuscript is missing, and the contents do not indicate the time of writing, the date given by Mrs. Todd – 1856 – has been retained. The departure of the bobolinks sets the season as early August. Several phrases in the first paragraph are taken from Revelation, where they are found in 3.12; 21.4; and 14.3. The final sentence in the paragraph is suggested by Luke 24.51. The quoted phrase in the third paragraph is the opening line of Longfellow's "The Reaper and the Flowers."

186

To John L. Graves *about 1856*

Ah John – *Gone?*

Then I lift the lid to my box of Phantoms, and lay another in, unto the Resurrection – Then will I gather in *Paradise*, the blossoms fallen here, and on the shores of the sea of Light, seek my missing sands.

Your Coz –

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (G 10). Ink. Addressed on the fold: Mr John L. Graves – Present. Unpublished.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. This letter, delivered by hand, was perhaps sent during the summer vacation when Graves visited Amherst at commencement time in August. The thought of the first sentence, almost identically expressed, is in letter no. 177, written in January 1855. Perhaps this letter was written earlier, though if so the circumstances have not been identified.

VI

LETTERS

187–245

[1858–1861]

Much has occurred . . . so much —
that I stagger as I write, in
its sharp remembrance.

[1858–1861]

The number of letters surviving in each of the years that follow is materially larger than it was in the years just preceding. Of special importance is the year 1858, for sometime then Emily Dickinson became seriously interested in writing poetry, and began to fashion her packets — the slim manuscript volumes that she continued to assemble for another decade or so. It is also the year when she began her correspondence with Samuel Bowles and his wife, an association that became intimate for all members of the Dickinson family.

There is no certainty when she first wrote the Reverend Charles Wadsworth, but he paid a call upon her early in 1860. Whether he or another is the one she addresses as "Dear Master" in the draft of the letter with which this group opens, may never be surely known. At present one conjectures no other whom she might thus have designated.

In 1861 the first child of Austin and Susan Dickinson was born, an event that engrossed Sue's attention. The continued exchange of notes with Sue thereafter is warm but never urgent.

This too is the period when she began to correspond with her younger cousins, Louise and Frances Norcross. At a domestic level it continued until her death, with an intimacy she shared with no others except Mrs. Holland.

It is, finally, the period when she was beginning to think of herself as one who might write for posterity. The letter exchange with Sue about the "Alabaster" poem, which occurred in the middle or late summer of 1861, seems to have been her first effort at consultation about her way of poetry. Her next and last takes place in April 1862, when she initiated a correspondence with T. W. Higginson. The years 1858 to 1861 are a period when her forces were gathering. The flood of her talent is rising.

187

To recipient unknown *about 1858*

Dear Master

I am ill, but grieving more that you are ill, I make my stronger hand work long eno' to tell you. I thought perhaps you were in Heaven, and when you spoke again, it seemed quite sweet, and wonderful, and surprised me so – I wish that you were well.

I would that all I love, should be weak no more. The Violets are by my side, the Robin very near, and "Spring" – they say, Who is she – going by the door –

Indeed it is God's house – and these are gates of Heaven, and to and fro, the angels go, with their sweet postillions – I wish that I were great, like Mr. Michael Angelo, and could paint for you. You ask me what my flowers said – then they were disobedient – I gave them messages. They said what the lips in the West, say, when the sun goes down, and so says the Dawn.

Listen again, Master. I did not tell you that today had been the Sabbath Day.

Each Sabbath on the Sea, makes me count the Sabbaths, till we meet on shore – and (will the) whether the hills will look as blue as the sailors say. I cannot talk any more (stay any longer) tonight (now), for this pain denies me.

How strong when weak to recollect, and easy, quite, to love. Will you tell me, please to tell me, soon as you are well.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 431–432.

This draft was left among ED's own papers, and no one knows whether a fair copy was made or sent to the person addressed. That it was meant as a reply to one from him is shown by the allusion to his question. She may have had the Reverend Charles Wadsworth in mind as "Master."

188

To Elizabeth Dickinson (Currier)? *about 1858*

I send a Violet, for Libby. I should have sent a *stem*, but was overtaken by snow drifts. I regret deeply, not to add a Butterfly, but have

lost my *Hat*, which precludes my catching one. Shall send "Little Jennie" as soon as I know where the Owner is. Am much ashamed to have kept it so long.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 422, in part; *Bachelor of Arts*, May 1895, in part; *L* (1931) 410, in part; *NEQ* XXVIII (1955) 293 n, in part.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. A fragment of violet is still affixed to the sheet. Though there is no certainty that ED's aunt Elizabeth Dickinson (but eight years older than ED) was the recipient of this letter, she is the only person ED is known to have called Libbie (see letters no. 897 and 1041).

189

To Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Bowles *about June 1858*

Dear Friends.

I am sorry you came, because you went away.

Hereafter, I will pick no Rose, lest it fade or prick me.

I would like to have you dwell here. Though it is almost nine o'clock, the skies are gay and yellow, and there's a purple craft or so, in which a friend could sail. Tonight looks like "Jerusalem." I think Jerusalem must be like Sue's Drawing Room, when we are talking and laughing there, and you and Mrs Bowles are by. I hope we may all behave so as to reach Jerusalem. How are your Hearts today? Ours are pretty well. I hope your tour was bright, and gladdened Mrs Bowles. Perhaps the Retrospect will call you back some morning.

You shall find us all at the gate, if you come in a hundred years, just as we stood that day.

If it become of "Jasper," previously, you will not object, so that we lean there still, looking after you.

I rode with Austin this morning.

He showed me mountains that touched the sky, and brooks that sang like Bobolinks. Was he not very kind? I will give them to you,

for they are mine and "all things are mine" excepting "Cephas and Apollos," for whom I have no taste.

Vinnie's love brims mine.

Take Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 212–213; *LL* 245–246; *L* (1931) 187–188, in part.

The extensive collection of the letters of Samuel Bowles to Austin and Susan Dickinson (HCL) shows that their friendship began to develop about 1858. At that time a letter written in friendly but not intimate terms speaks of Mrs. Bowles's sorrow at the birth of a stillborn child. ED's hope that their trip had "gladdened Mrs. Bowles" suggests that the visit to Amherst had been made for Mrs. Bowles's sake. The time of the year is indicated by the nine o'clock sunset. The concluding biblical allusion is to 1 Corinthians 3.21–22: "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours."

This is the only letter written jointly to Mr. and Mrs. Bowles.

190

To Joseph A. Sweetser *early summer 1858*

Much has occurred, dear Uncle, since my writing you – so much – that I stagger as I write, in its sharp remembrance. Summers of bloom – and months of frost, and days of jingling bells, yet all the while this hand upon our fireside. Today has been so glad without, and yet so grieved within – so jolly, shone the sun – and now the moon comes stealing, and yet it makes none glad. I cannot always see the light – please tell me if it shines.

I hope you are well, these many days, and have much joy.

There is a smiling summer here, which causes birds to sing, and sets the bees in motion.

Strange blooms arise on many stalks, and trees receive their tenants.

I would you saw what I can see, and imbibed this music. The day went down, long time ago, and still a simple choir bear the canto on.

I dont know who it is, that sings, nor *did* I, would I tell!

God gives us many cups. Perhaps you will come to Amherst, before the wassail's done. Our man has mown today, and as he plied his scythe, I thought of *other* mowings, and garners far from here.

I wonder how long we shall wonder; how early we shall *know*.

Your brother kindly brought me a Tulip Tree this morning. A blossom from his tree.

I find them very thoughtful friends, and love them much. It seems very pleasant that other ones will so soon be near.

We formed Aunt Kate's acquaintance, for the first – last spring, and had a few sweet hours, as do new found *girls*.

I meet some octogenarians – but men and women seldomer, and at *longer* intervals – "little children," of whom is the "Kingdom of Heaven." How tiny some will have to grow, to gain admission there! I hardly know what I have said – my words put all their feathers on – and fluttered here and there. Please give my warmest love to my aunts and cousins – and write me, should you please, some summer's evening.

Affy,
Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: Jones Library. Ink. Dated: Friday night.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 397–398.

After the Dickinsons moved back to Main Street, the Luke Sweetsers were their closest neighbors. ED here anticipates a visit at the home of the latter of some members of the Joseph Sweetser family. In a letter to Mrs. Joseph Sweetser written many years later (no. 478), ED alludes to her childhood memories of her Aunt Kate, possibly in the period of 1840–1842, when, as Mrs. Bingham suggests (*Home* 506), the family was probably living in Amherst. The visit of the previous spring, here mentioned, may have been ED's first opportunity as an adult to know her aunt. In "this hand upon our fireside," ED alludes probably to the continued poor health of her mother.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

191

To Mrs. Joseph Haven — *early summer 1858*

Dear Mrs Haven –

Have you – or has Mr Haven – in his Library, either "Klosterheim," or "The Confessions of an Opium Eater," by De-Quincey? I have sent to Northampton, but cannot get them there, and they are

missing just now, from the College Library. I thank you very much, should you have them, if you will please lend them to me – for tho' the hours are very full, I think that I might snatch here and there a moment, if I had the books.

I hope you are happy this summer day, tho' I know you are lonely. I should love to pass an hour with you, and the little girls, could I leave home, or mother. I do not go out at all, lest father will come and miss me, or miss some little act, which I might forget, should I run away – Mother is much as usual. I know not what to hope of her. Please remember Vinnie and I, for we are perplexed often –

Affy –

Emilie –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (Haven 1). Ink. Addressed on the fold: Mrs. Haven./Present.

PUBLICATION: *Indiana Quarterly for Bookmen* I (1945) 116; *Home* 403.

The *Hampshire and Franklin Express* announced on 9 June 1858 that Professor Haven had accepted an appointment to the faculty of the Congregational Seminary in Chicago. His absence from Amherst, here implied, may have been on business connected with the change. ED's interest in De Quincey appears here for the first time. De Quincey's only novel, *Klosterheim*, had been written some years before (1832). Like the letter preceding, this refers to the concern felt about Mrs. Dickinson's health.

192

To Mrs. Joseph Haven — *late August 1858*

Good night, dear Mrs Haven! I am glad I did not know you better, since it would then have grieved me more that you went away.

Some summer-afternoon, I thought – we might be acquainted, but summer afternoons to me have had so many wings, and meanwhile, you have flown! Thank you for recollecting me in the sweet moss – which with your memory, I have lain in a little box, unto the Resurrection. I hoped to see your face again – hoped to see Mr Haven, and the little girls.

Though I met you little, I shall miss you all – Your going will redden the maple – and fringe the Gentian sooner, in the soft fields.

Permit us to keep you in our hearts, although you seem to outward eye, to be travelling from us! That is the sweet prerogative of the left behind.

I know you will come again – if not today – *tomorrow* – if not tomorrow as we count – after the little interval we pass in lifetime here. Then we wont say "Goodbye," since immortality – makes the phrase quite obsolete. Good night is long eno',

I bid it, smiling!

Emilie –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (Haven 2). Ink. Addressed: Mrs. Haven. A small rosebud which accompanied the letter is still in the envelope.

PUBLICATION: *Indiana Quarterly for Bookmen* I (1945) 116–117; *Home* 403–404.

The Haven family left Amherst for Chicago after the college commencement, 12 August 1858.

193

To Samuel Bowles *late August 1858?*

Dear Mr Bowles.

I got the little pamphlet. I think you sent it to me, though unfamiliar with your hand – I may mistake.

Thank you if I am right. Thank you, if not, since here I find bright pretext to ask you how you are tonight, and for the health of four more, Elder and Minor "Mary," Sallie and Sam, tenderly to inquire. I hope your cups are full. I hope your vintage is untouched. In such a porcelain life, one likes to be *sure* that all is well, lest one stumble upon one's hopes in a pile of broken crockery.

My friends are my "estate." Forgive me then the avarice to hoard them! They tell me those were poor early, have different views of gold. I dont know how that is. God is not so wary as we, else he would give us no friends, lest we forget him! The Charms of the Heaven in the bush are superceded I fear, by the Heaven in the hand, occasionally. Summer stopped since you were here. Nobody noticed her – that is, no men and women. Doubtless, the fields are rent by petite anguish, and "mourners go about" the Woods. But this is not for us. Business

enough indeed, our stately Resurrection! A special Courtesy, I judge, from what the Clergy say! To the "natural man," Bumblebees would seem an improvement, and a spicing of Birds, but far be it from me, to impugn such majestic tastes. Our Pastor says we are a "Worm." How is that reconciled? "Vain – sinful Worm" is possibly of another species.

Do you think we shall "see God"? Think of "Abraham" strolling with him in genial promenade!

The men are mowing the second Hay. The cocks are smaller than the first, and spicier.

I would distill a cup, and bear to all my friends, drinking to her no more astir, by beck, or burn, or moor!

Good night, Mr Bowles! This is what they say who come back in the morning, also the closing paragraph on repealed lips. Confidence in Daybreak modifies Dusk.

Blessings for Mrs Bowles, and kisses for the bairns' lips. We want to see you, Mr Bowles, but spare you the rehearsal of "familiar truths."

Good Night,
Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Amherst.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 190–192; *LL* 202–203; *L* (1931) 182–183.

No information has been found on the nature of the "little pamphlet" that Bowles had sent. At this time there were three young children in the Bowles family: Sarah Augusta (Sallie), born in 1850; Samuel, born in 1851; and Mary (Mamie), born in 1854.

194

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson — *26 September 1858*

I hav'nt any paper, dear, but faith continues firm – Presume if I met with my "deserts," I should receive nothing. Was informed to that effect today by a "dear pastor." What a privilege it is to be so insignificant! Thought of intimating that the "Atonement" was'nt needed for such atomies! I think you went on Friday. Some time is longer than the rest, and some is very short. Omit to classify Friday – Saturday – Sunday! Evenings get longer with the Autumn – that is nothing new!

The Asters are pretty well. "How are the other blossoms?" "Pretty well, I thank you." Vinnie and I are pretty well. Carlo – comfortable – terrifying man and beast, with renewed activity – is cuffed some – hurled from piazza frequently, when Miss Lavinia's "flies" need her action elsewhere.

She has the "patent action," I have long felt!

I attended church early in the day. Prof Warner preached. Subject – "little drops of dew."

Este[*y*] took the stump in the afternoon. Aunt [Catharine] Sweetser's dress would have startled Sheba. Aunt [Lucretia] Bullard was not out – presume she stayed at home for "self examination." Accompanied by father, they visited the grave yard, after services. These are stirring scenes! Austin supped with us. "Appears well." Ah – Dobbin – Dobbin – you little know the chink which your dear face makes. We would'nt mind the sun, dear, if it did'nt *set* – How much you cost – how much Mat costs – I will never sell you for a piece of silver. I'll buy you back with red drops, when you go away. I'll keep you in a casket – I'll bury you in the garden – and keep a bird to watch the spot – perhaps my pillow's safer – Try my bosom last – That's nearest of them all, and I should hear a foot the quickest, should I hear a foot – The thought of the little *brown plumes* makes my eye awry. The pictures in the air have few visitors.

You see they come to their own and their own do not receive them. "Power and honor" are here today, and "dominion and glory"! I shall never tell!

You may tell, when "the seal" is opened; *Mat* may tell when they "fall on their faces" – but I shall be lighting the lamps then in my new house – and I cannot come.

God bless you, if he please! Bless Mr John and Mrs Mat – Bless two or three others! I wish to be there – Shall I come? If I jump, shall you catch me. Hav'nt the conceit to jump! Vinnie is asleep – and must dream her message. Good night, little girls!

Since there are two varieties, we will say it softly – Since there are snowier beds, we'll talk a little every night, before we sleep in these!

Love Emilie –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 3). Ink. Dated: Sunday.

PUBLICATION: *LL* 28–29, in part.

Late in September Susan Dickinson went to visit her sister Martha Smith at Geneva, New York. The visit in Amherst of the Joseph Sweetser

family, anticipated earlier, occurred in September, and the Dickinson reunion was augmented by the coming of the Reverend and Mrs. Asa Bullard from Cambridge. ED's dog Carlo (breed unknown), is first mentioned in letter no. 34. Captain William Dobbin is the faithful friend of Amelia Sedley in *Vanity Fair*. The allusion in the third paragraph from the end is to Revelation 7.11: "And all the angels . . . fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God."

195

To Dr. and Mrs. J. G. Holland *about 6 November 1858*

Dear Hollands,

Good-night! I can't stay any longer in a world of death. Austin is ill of fever. I buried my garden last week — our man, Dick, lost a little girl through the scarlet fever. I thought perhaps that *you* were dead, and not knowing the sexton's address, interrogate the daisies. Ah! dainty — dainty Death! Ah! democratic Death! Grasping the proudest zinnia from my purple garden, — then deep to his bosom calling the serf's child!

Say, is he everywhere? Where shall I hide my things? Who is alive? The woods are dead. Is Mrs. H. alive? Annie and Katie — are they below, or received to nowhere?

I shall not tell how short time is, for I was told by lips which sealed as soon as it was said, and the open revere the shut. You were not here in summer. *Summer*? My memory flutters — had I — was there a summer? You should have seen the fields go — gay little entomology! Swift little ornithology! Dancer, and floor, and cadence quite gathered away, and I, a phantom, to you a phantom, rehearse the story! An orator of feather unto an audience of fuzz, — and pantomimic plaudits. "Quite as good as a play," indeed!

Tell Mrs. Holland she is mine. Ask her if *vice versa*? Mine is but just the thief's request — "Remember me to-day." Such are the bright chirographies of the "Lamb's Book." Goodnight! My ships are in! — My window overlooks the wharf! One yacht, and a man-of-war; two brigs and a schooner! "Down with the topmast! Lay her a' hold, a' hold!"

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 179–180; *LL* 307–308; *L* (1931) 173–174; *LH* 51–52: dated (presumably by ED): Saturday Eve.

In October 1858, Austin Dickinson was taken ill with typhoid fever. Harriet Matthews, the eight-year-old daughter of Richard Matthews, the Dickinson stableman, died of scarlet fever on November 1. ED uses the same phrase "Mine is but just the thief's request" in a later letter to Higginson (no. 282).

196

To Mrs. Samuel Bowles *about December 1858*

Dear Mrs Bowles.

Since I have no sweet flower to send you, I enclose my heart; a little one, sunburnt, half broken sometimes, yet close as the spaniel, to it's friends. Your flowers came from Heaven, to which if I should ever go, I will pluck you palms.

My words are far away when I attempt to thank you, so take the silver tear instead, from my full eye. You have often remembered me.

I have little dominion — Are there not wiser than I, who with curious treasure, could requite your gift. Angels fill the hand that loaded

Emily's!

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Undated.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 213; *LL* 246; *L* (1931) 201.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. The gift which this letter acknowledges may have been a birthday remembrance. There was hardly another month when ED could have said: "I have no sweet flower to send you."

197

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 19 December 1858*

One Sister have I in our house,
And one, a hedge away.
There's only one recorded,
But both belong to me.

One came the road that I came –
And wore my last year's gown –
The other, as a bird her nest,
Builded our hearts among.

She did not sing as we did –
It was a different tune –
Herself to her a music
As Bumble bee of June.

Today is far from Childhood –
But up and down the hills
I held her hand the tighter –
Which shortened all the miles –

And still her hum
The years among,
Deceives the Butterfly;
Still in her Eye
The Violets lie
Mouldered this many May.

I spilt the dew –
But took the morn –
I chose this single star
From out the wide night's numbers –
Sue – forevermore!

Emilie –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (pasted into Martha Dickinson Bianchi's copy of *The Single Hound*). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *The Single Hound* 1–2; *Poems* (1955) 17–18.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. The lines were perhaps sent as a greeting on Sue's twenty-eighth birthday.

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1858*

To my Father –

to whose untiring efforts in my behalf, I am indebted for my *morning-hours* – viz – 3. AM. to 12. PM. these grateful lines are inscribed by his aff

Daughter.

Sleep is supposed to be
By souls of sanity –
The shutting of the eye.

Sleep is the station grand
Down wh' on either hand –
The Hosts of Witness stand!

Morn is supposed to be
By people of degree –
The breaking of the Day!

Morning has not occurred!

That shall Aurora be
East of Eternity!
One with the banner gay,
One in the red array –
That is the Break of Day!

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 127). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 226–227; *Poems* (1955) 16–17.

Since ED sent a copy of this poem with its accompanying note to Susan Dickinson, and preserved another in one of her packets, it is probable that she never intended it for delivery to her father, whose household custom is indicated in a letter to the Hollands (no. 175): ". . . father rapped on my door to wake me this morning. . ."

To Louise Norcross *about 4 January 1859*

Since it snows this morning, dear Loo, too fast for interruption, put your brown curls in a basket, and come and sit with me.

I am sewing for Vinnie, and Vinnie is flying through the flakes to buy herself a little hood. It's quite a fairy morning, and I often lay down my needle, and "build a castle in the air" which seriously impedes the sewing project. What if I pause a little longer, and write a note to you! Who will be the wiser? I have known little of you, since the October morning when our families went out driving, and you and I in the dining-room decided to be distinguished. It's a great thing to be "great," Loo, and you and I might tug for a life, and never accomplish it, but no one can stop our looking on, and you know some cannot sing, but the orchard is full of birds, and we all can listen. What if we learn, ourselves, some day! Who indeed knows? [?] said you had many little cares; I hope they do not fatigue you. I would not like to think of Loo as weary, now and then. Sometimes *I* get tired, and I would rather none I love would understand the word. . . .

Do you still attend Fanny Kemble? "Aaron Burr" and father think her an "animal," but I fear zoölogy has few such instances. I have heard many notedly *bad* readers, and a fine one would be almost a fairy surprise. When will you come again, Loo? For you remember, dear, you are one of the ones from whom I do not run away! I keep an ottoman in my heart exclusively for you. My love for your father and Fanny.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 229–230; *LL* 207–208; *L* (1931) 215–216, dated January, 1859.

A three-day snowstorm commenced on 4 January 1859. The Norcross and Dickinson families had been together during the previous October. Fanny Kemble gave public readings from Shakespeare after her retirement from the stage in 1849. This is perhaps ED's first letter to Louise Norcross, who was but sixteen at the time.

To Mrs. Joseph Haven *13 February 1859*

Dear Mrs Haven.

Your remembrance surprises me. I hardly feel entitled to it. A most sweet surprise, which can hardly be affirmed of all our surprises. I grieve that I cannot claim it in a larger degree. Perhaps tho', sweeter as it is – *unmerited* remembrance – "Grace" – the saints would call it. Careless girls like me, cannot testify. Thank you for this, and your warm note.

We have hardly recovered laughing from Mr Haven's jolly one. I insist to this day, that I have received internal injuries. Could Mr H. be responsible for an early grave? The Coat is still in the dark, but the mirth to which it has given rise, will gleam when coats and rascals have passed into tradition.

The letters of suspected gentlemen form quite a valuable addition to our family library, and father pursues the search with a mixture of fun and perseverence, which is quite diabolical! I will give you the earliest intelligence of the arrest of our friend, who for the mirth he has afforded, surely merits *triumph*, more than transportation.

Father is in New York, just now, and Vinnie in Boston – while Mother and I for greater celebrity, are remaining at home.

My mother's only sister has had an invalid winter, and Vinnie has gone to enliven the house, and make the days shorter to my sick aunt. I would like more sisters, that the taking out of one, might not leave such stillness. Vinnie has been all, so long, I feel the oddest fright at parting with her for an hour, lest a storm arise, and I go unsheltered.

She talked of you before she went – often said she missed you, would add a couplet of her own, were she but at home. I hope you are well as I write, and that the far city seems to you like home. I do not know your successors. Father has called upon Mr S[eelye] but I am waiting for Vinnie to help me do my courtesies. Mr S. preached in our church last Sabbath upon "predestination," but I do not respect "doctrines," and did not listen to him, so I can neither praise, nor blame. Your house has much of pathos, to those that pass who loved you.

I miss the geranium at the window, and the hand that tended the geranium.

I shall miss the clustering frocks at the door, bye and bye when summer comes, unless myself in a *new* frock, am too far to see.

How short, dear Mrs Haven!

A darting fear – a pomp – a tear –
A waking on a morn
to find that what one waked for,
inhales the different dawn.

Receive much love from

Emilie –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (Haven 3). Ink. Dated: Sabbath Eve.

PUBLICATION: *Indiana Quarterly for Bookmen* I (1945) 117–118; *Home* 404–405. The concluding quatrain is in *Poems* (1955) 71.

The Reverend Julius H. Seelye was elected, 20 August 1858, to the chair in philosophy vacated by Professor Haven. Seelye preached in the First Church on February 6. Vinnie was in Boston with Mrs. Loring Norcross, who died in the following year.

201

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1859*

Dear Sue –

I should love dearly to spend the Evening with the girls, but have made calls this afternoon, and accidentally left my mind at Prof Warner's.

Please reserve an Ottoman for my Spirit, which is behind Vinnie's.

Love for the Germanians –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 69). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 225–226.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. A note in *FF* reads: "Declining an invitation to an evening of amateur music." Here "the girls" are represented as "the Germanians" (see letter no. 118).

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *about 20 February 1859*

Not alone to thank you for your sweet note, is my errand, dear Mrs. Holland, tho' I do indeed, but will you please to help me?

I guess I have done wrong – I don't know certainly, but Austin tells me so, and he is older than I, and knows more of ordinances.

When Vinnie is here – I ask her; if she says I sin, I say, "Father, I have sinned" – If she sanctions me, I am not afraid, but Vinnie is gone now, and to my sweet elder sister, in the younger's absence, something guides my feet.

These are the circumstances. Your friend and neighbor, Mr. Chapman, was in town last week, with Mr. Hyde of Ware, as a business ally.

They called upon us Wednesday evening, and were our guests on the evening following. After most pleasant conversations, we parted for the night – the gentlemen then proposing to return next day. Business did not terminate, and sitting next evening with S[ue], as I often do, some one rang the bell and I ran, as is my custom.

What was my surprise and shame, on hearing Mr. Chapman ask for "Mrs. D!" K[ate] S[cott], a guest of [Sue]'s, was my confederate, and clinging fast like culprit mice, we opened consultation. Since the dead might have heard us scamper, we could not allege that we did not run, besides, it was *untrue*, which to people so scared as we, was a minor consideration, but would have its weight with our seniors. I proposed that we ask forgiveness.

K. was impenitent and demurred. While we were yet deliberating, S[ue] opened the door, announced that we were detected, and invited us in.

Overwhelmed with disgrace, I gasped a brief apology, but the gentlemen simply looked at us with a grave surprise.

After they had retired, Austin said we were very rude, and I crept to my little room, quite chagrined and wretched. Now do you think Mr. Chapman will forgive me? I do not mind Mr. Hyde of Ware, because he does not please me, but Mr. Chapman is my friend, talks of my books with me, and I would not wound him.

I write a little note to him, saying I am sorry, and will he forgive me, and remember it no more? Now will I ask so much of you, that

you read it for me, judge if it is said as yourself would say it, were *you* rude instead of me – that if you approve, when you walk again, you will take it for me to Mr. Chapman's office – tell him for me, intercede as my sister should? Then if he forgives me, I shall write you quickly, but if he should not, and we meet the next in Newgate, know that I was a loving felon, sentenced for a door bell.

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text derives from a transcript (AC) made by Mrs. Todd.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 153–155; *LH* 53–54.

In mid-February Catherine Scott Turner (later Anthon) visited her former schoolmate Susan Dickinson. On Wednesday, February 15 the question of ownership of the meetinghouse in South Amherst came before referees: the Honorable Reuben A. Chapman of Springfield, and William Hyde of Ware. Counsel included, for the new society, Edward Dickinson, and for the old, Ithamar F. Conkey. This letter seems to have been written about Sunday, February 20.

203

To Catherine Scott Turner (Anthon) *about March 1859*

I never missed a Kate before, – Two Sues – Eliza and a Martha, comprehend my girls.

Sweet at my door this March night another Candidate – Go Home! We don't like Katies here! – Stay! My heart votes for you, and what am I indeed to dispute her ballot – ? – What are your qualifications? Dare you dwell in the *East* where we dwell? Are you afraid of the Sun? – When you hear the new violet sucking her way among the sods, shall you be *resolute*? All *we* are *strangers* – dear – The world is not acquainted with us, because we are not acquainted with her. And Pilgrims! – Do you hesitate? and *Soldiers* oft – some of us victors, but those I do not *see* tonight owing to the smoke. – We are hungry, and thirsty, sometimes – We are barefoot – and cold –

Will you still come? *Then* bright I record you! *Kate* gathered in March!

It is a small bouquet, dear – but what it lacks in size, it gains in fadelessness, – Many can boast a hollyhock, but few can bear a *rose*!

And should new flower smile at limited associates, pray her remember, were there *many* they were not worn upon the breast – but tilled in the pasture! So I rise, wearing her – so I sleep, holding, – Sleep at last with her fast in my hand and wake bearing my flower. –

Emilie –

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text is from a transcript (HCL) made by Mrs. Anthon for Susan Dickinson. It is dated: Amherst. Mrs. Anthon made another transcript (AC) for Mrs. Todd. There are slight variations in punctuation.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 146–147; *LL* 206; *L* (1931) 144–145.

Mrs. Anthon dated the letter 1859, and it may have been written after her February visit, referred to in the preceding letter. The persons named in the first paragraph (omitted in all printed versions) are probably Susan Gilbert Dickinson, Susan Phelps (see letter no. 221), Eliza Coleman, and Martha Gilbert Smith.

204

To Mrs. J. G. Holland — *2 March 1859*

"Sister."

You did my will. I thank you for it. Let me work for you! What prettier negotiation than of friend for friend? I did not suspect complacency in "Mr Brown of Sheffield"! It is plain that Vinnie is gone – she assays them for me.

Complacency! My Father! in such a world as this, when we must all stand barefoot before thy jasper doors!

Thank you for putting me on trail. I will make quite a fox, in time, unless I die early.

I gather from "Republican" that you are about to doff your weeds for a Bride's Attire. Vive le fireside! Am told that fasting gives to food marvellous Aroma, but by birth a Bachelor, disavow Cuisine.

Meeting is well worth parting. How kind in some to die, adding *impatience* to the rapture of our thought of Heaven!

As by the dead we love to sit –
Become so wondrous dear –
As for the lost we grapple
Though all the rest are here –

In broken Mathematics
We estimate our prize
Vast, in it's *fading* ratio
To our penurious eyes.

I had rather you lived nearer – I would like to touch you. Pointed attentions from the Angels, to two or three I love, make me sadly jealous.

People with *Wings* at option, look loftily at hands and feet, which induces watchfulness! How gay to love one's friends! How *passing* gay to fancy that they reciprocate the whim, tho' by the Seas divided, tho' by a single Daisy hidden from our eyes! I would not exchange it for all the funds of the Father. Vinnie is yet in Boston. Thank you for recollecting. I am somewhat afraid at night, but the Ghosts have been very attentive, and I have no cause to complain. Of course one cant expect one's furniture to sit still all night, and if the Chairs do prance – and the Lounge polka a little, and the shovel give it's arm to the tongs, one dont mind such things! From fearing them at first, I've grown to quite admire them, and now we understand each other, it is most enlivening! How near, and yet how far we are! The new March winds could bring me, and yet "whole legions of Angels" may lie between our lips!

Emilie

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 16). Ink. Dated: Wednesday.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 62–63. The verse is in *Poems* (1955) 71.

This letter acknowledges Mrs. Holland's reply to ED's letter of February 20 (no. 202). On February 28 Dr. Holland returned from a lecture tour. In *David Copperfield*, Brooks (not Brown) of Sheffield designates a person who would remain nameless (see also letters no. 548 and 820). Vinnie was still in Boston (see letter no. 200).

205

To Samuel Bowles *early April 1859*

Friend,

Sir,

I did not see you. I am very sorry. Shall I keep the Wine till you come again, or send it in by "Dick?" It is now behind the door in the

Library, also an unclaimed flower. I did not know you were going so soon — Oh my tardy feet!

Will you not come again? Friends are gems — infrequent. Potosi is a care, Sir. I guard it reverently, for I could not afford to be poor now, after affluence. I hope the hearts in Springfield are not so heavy as they were — God bless the hearts in Springfield!

I am happy you have a "Horse." I hope you will get stalwart, and come and see us many years.

I have but two acquaintance, the "Quick and the Dead" — and would like more.

I write you frequently, and am much ashamed.

My voice is not quite loud enough to cross so many fields, which will, if you please, apologize for my pencil. Will you take my love to Mrs Bowles, whom I remember every day.

Emilie

Vinnie halloos from the world of nightcaps, "dont forget her love!"

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink and pencil. Undated. Reproduced in facsimile in *Letters* (1931) 188.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 198–199; *LL* 221; *L* (1931) 188–189.

On 8 April 1859 Samuel Bowles wrote Charles Allen: "I had the present of a bottle of wine this week, from a woman, with an affectionate note. We had some good food Fast-day [April 7] and we drank the wine." (George S. Merriam, *Life and Times of Samuel Bowles* 296.)

206

To Louise Norcross — *late April 1859*

Dear Loo,

You did not acknowledge my vegetable; perhaps you are not familiar with it. I was reared in the garden, you know. It was to be eaten with mustard! Bush eighty feet high, just under chamber window — much used at this season when other vegetables are gone. You should snuff the hay if you were here to-day, infantile as yet, homely, as cubs are prone to be, but giving brawny promise of hay-cocks by and by. "Methinks I see you," as school-girls say, perched upon a cock with the "latest work," and confused visions of bumblebees tugging at your

hat. Not so far off, cousin, as it used to be, that vision and the hat. It makes me feel so hurried, I run and brush my hair so to be all ready.

I enjoy much with a precious fly, during sister's absence, not one of your blue monsters, but a timid creature, that hops from pane to pane of her white house, so very cheerfully, and hums and thrums, a sort of speck piano. Tell Vinnie I'll kill him the day she comes, for I sha'n't need him any more, and she don't mind flies!

Tell Fanny and papa to come with the sweet-williams.

Tell Vinnie I counted three peony noses, red as Sammie Matthews's, just out of the ground, and get her to make the accompanying face.

"By-Bye."

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 231–232; *LL* 209–210; *L* (1931) 216–217, dated 1859.

Sammie Matthews was a son of Dick Matthews, the Dickinson stableman. Vinnie was still with Mrs. Norcross.

207

To Dr. and Mrs. J. G. Holland *September 1859*

Dear Hollands,

Belong to me! We have no fires yet, and the evenings grow cold. To-morrow, stoves are set. How many barefoot shiver I trust their Father knows who saw not fit to give them shoes.

Vinnie is sick to-night, which gives the world a russet tinge, usually so red. It is only a headache, but when the head aches next to you, it becomes important. When she is well, time leaps. When she is ill, he lags, or stops entirely.

Sisters are brittle things. God was penurious with me, which makes me shrewd with Him.

One is a dainty sum! One bird, one cage, one flight; one song in those far woods, as yet suspected by faith only!

This is September, and you were coming in September. Come! Our parting is too long. There has been frost enough. We must have summer now, and "whole legions" of daisies.

The gentian is a greedy flower, and overtakes us all. Indeed, this world is short, and I wish, until I tremble, to touch the ones I love before the hills are red — are gray — are white — are "born again"! If we knew how deep the crocus lay, we never should let her go. Still, crocuses stud many mounds whose gardeners till in anguish some tiny, vanished bulb.

We saw you that Saturday afternoon, but heedlessly forgot to ask where you were going, so did not know, and could not write. Vinnie saw Minnie flying by, one afternoon at Palmer. She supposed you were all there on your way from the sea, and untied her fancy! To say that her fancy wheedled her is superfluous.

We talk of you together, then diverge on life, then hide in you again, as a safe fold. Don't leave us long, dear friends! You know we're children still, and children fear the dark.

Are you well at home? Do you work now? Has it altered much since I was there? Are the children women, and the women thinking it will soon be afternoon? We will help each other bear our unique burdens.

Is Minnie with you now? Take her our love, if she is. Do her eyes grieve her now? Tell her she may have half ours.

Mother's favorite sister is sick, and mother will have to bid her good-night. It brings mists to us all; — the aunt whom Vinnie visits, with whom she spent, I fear, her last inland Christmas. Does God take care of those at sea? My aunt is such a timid woman!

Will you write to us? I bring you all their loves — *many*.

They tire me.

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 172–174; *L* (1931) 167–168; *LH* 57–58.

It was in her letter of February 20 (no. 202) that ED first called Mrs. Holland her "sister." In New England the wild gentian blooms in August, and it here is alluded to as a harbinger of the season's end. On Saturday, 6 August 1859, the Hollands attended an excursion to Amherst of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Mrs. Dickinson's sister Lavinia Norcross, fatally ill, lived until the following April (see letter no. 217).

208

To Catherine Scott Turner (Anthon) *1859?*

When Katie walks, this simple pair accompany her side,
When Katie runs unwearied they follow on the road,
When Katie kneels, their loving hands still clasp her pious knee –
Ah! Katie! Smile at Fortune, with *two* so *knit to thee*!

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text is from a transcript (HCL) made by Mrs. Anthon.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 146; *Poems* (1955) 159.

The transcript bears the notation: "Emily knitted a pair of *garters* for me & *sent them over* with these lines." Kate Turner visited Susan Dickinson some four or five times during the years 1859–1861. Any date for this note and for the letter following (no. 209) is conjectural, but the tone suggests that they were written near the beginning of the friendship.

209

To Catherine Scott Turner (Anthon) *late 1859?*

Katie –

Last year at this time I did not miss you, but positions shifted, until I hold your black in strong hallowed remembrance, and trust my colors are to you tints slightly beloved. You cease indeed to talk, which is a custom prevalent among things parted and torn, but shall I class this, dear, among elect exceptions, and bear you just as usual unto the kind Lord? – We dignify our Faith, when we can cross the ocean with it, though most prefer ships.

How do you do this year? I remember you as fires begin, and evenings open at Austin's, without the Maid in black, Katie, without the Maid in black. Those were unnatural evenings. – *Bliss* is unnatural – How many years, I wonder, will sow the moss upon them, before we bind again, a little altered it may be, elder a little it *will* be, and yet the same as suns, which shine, between our lives and loss, and violets, not last years, but having the Mother's eyes. –

Do you find plenty of food at home? Famine is unpleasant. –

It is too late for "Frogs," or which pleases me better, dear – not quite early enough! The pools were full of you for a brief period, but that brief period blew away, leaving me with many stems, and but a few foliage! Gentlemen here have a way of plucking the tops of trees, and putting the fields in their cellars annually, which in point of taste is execrable, and would they please omit, I should have fine vegetation & foliage all the year round, and never a winter month. Insanity to the sane seems so unnecessary – but I am only one, and they are "four and forty," which little affair of numbers leaves me impotent. Aside from this dear Katie, inducements to visit Amherst are as they were. – I am pleasantly located in the deep sea, but love will row you out if her hands are strong, and don't wait till I land, for I'm going ashore on the other side –

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 149–150, in part; *LL* 221–222, in part; *L* (1931) 147–148, in part: dated "1861 ?."

The text is from the transcript (AC) made by Mrs. Anthon for Mrs. Todd. For the date, see the letter preceding. The phrase "I am pleasantly located in the deep sea" is similar to expressions used in letters written in 1864 and 1865, when ED's eyes were giving her trouble (nos. 294 and 306). But in context here the expression does not imply a physical handicap.

210

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *December 1859*

God bless you, dear Mrs. Holland! I read it in the paper.

I'm so glad it's a little boy, since now the little sisters have some one to draw them on the sled – and if a grand old lady you should live to be, there's something sweet, they say, in a son's arm.

I pray for the tenants of that holy chamber, the wrestler, and the wrestled for. I pray for distant father's heart, swollen, happy heart!

Savior keep them all!

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 172; *L* (1931) 167; *LH* 59.

Theodore Holland was born, 7 December 1859, and the birth was announced in the *Springfield Republican*. Dr. Holland was away on a lecture tour. Annie Holland was now eight years old; Kate was six.

211

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *December 1859?*

Will someone lay this little flower on Mrs. Holland's pillow?

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1895) 178; *L* (1931) 171; *LH* 61.
This note may shortly have followed the preceding letter.

212

To Mrs. Samuel Bowles *10 December 1859*

Dear Mrs Bowles

You send sweet messages. Remembrance is more sweet than Robins in May orchards.

I love to trust that round bright fires, some, braver than me, take my pilgrim name. How are papa, mama, and the little people?

Traditions of "Memes" eyes, and little Sallie's virtues, and Sam's handsome face, are handed down

It storms in Amherst five days —it snows, and then it rains, and then soft fogs like vails hang on all the houses, and then the days turn Topaz, like a lady's pin.

Thank you for bright boquet, and afterwards Verbena. I made a plant of a little bough of yellow Heliotrope which the boquet bore me, and call it "Mary Bowles." It is many days since the summer day when you came with Mr Bowles, and before another summer day it will be many days. My garden is a little knoll with faces under it, and only the pines sing tunes, now the birds are absent. I cannot walk to the distant friends on nights piercing as these, so I put both hands on the window-pane, and try to think how birds fly, and imitate, and fail, like Mr "Rasselas." I could make a balloon of a Dandelion, but the

fields are gone, and only "Prof Lowe" remains to weep with me. If I built my house I should like to call you. I talk of all these things with Carlo, and his eyes grow meaning, and his shaggy feet keep a slower pace. Are you safe tonight? I hope you may be glad. I ask God on my knee to send you much prosperity, few winter days, and long suns. I have a childish hope to gather all I love together – and sit down beside, and smile.

Austin and Sue went to Boston Saturday, which makes the Village very large.

I find they are my crowd. Will you come to Amherst? The streets are very cold now, but we will make you warm. But if you never came, perhaps you could write a letter, saying how much you would like to, if it were "God's will." I give Goodnight, and daily love to you and Mr Bowles.

Emilie.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Monday Eve.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 192–193, in part; *LL* 203–204, in part; *L* (1931) 183–194, in part.

The weather reports confirm the date. The New Hampshire balloonist T. S. C. Lowe abandoned his idea of crossing the Atlantic after three months of preparation. The *Springfield Republican* comments on December 9: "'Professor' Lowe boasts that he cleared $4,000 by his Atlantic balloon humbug." On the spelling of "Mamie's" name, see letter no. 235.

213

To Mrs. Samuel Bowles *after Christmas 1859*

I should like to thank dear Mrs Bowles for the little Book, except my cheek is red with shame because I write so often.

Even the "Lilies of the field" have their dignities.

Why did you bind it in green and gold?

The *immortal* colors.

I take it for an emblem. I never read before what Mr Parker wrote. I heard that he was "poison." Then I like poison very well. Austin stayed from service yesterday afternoon, and I, calling upon him, found him reading my Christmas gift. This – together with the fact that

Sue asked me the other day how to spell "Puseyite," looks very suspicious!

I wish the "faith of the fathers" did'nt wear brogans, and carry blue umbrellas, I give you all "New Year"! I think you kept gay Christmas, from the friend's account, and can only sigh with one not present at "John Gilpin," "and when he next doth ride a race," &c. You picked four berries from my Holly – Grasping Mrs Bowles!

Today is very cold, yet have I much boquet upon the window pane of moss and fern. I call them *Saints'* flowers, because they do not romp as other flowers do, but stand so still and white. The snow is very tall between our house and Austin's, which makes the trees so low that they tumble my hair, when I cross the bridge.

I think there will be no spring this year, the flowers are gone so far. Let us have spring in our heart, and never mind the Orchises! Sue looks like "Madame Roland" in the scarlet cape. I tell her so, and she plays Revolution, which has a fine effect! Please have my love, Mother's, and Vinnie's – Carlo sends a brown kiss, and Pussy, a gray and white one, to each of the Children.

Please, now I write so often, make lamplighter of me, then I shall not have lived in vain.

Dear Mrs Bowles, dear Mr Bowles, dear Sally, Sam, and Meme, now all shut your eyes, while I do benediction!

Lovingly,
Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Amherst.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 193–195, in part; *LL* 205–206, in part; *L* (1931) 184–185, in part.

ED seems to be acknowledging as a Christmas remembrance Theodore Parker's *The Two Christmas Celebrations* (1859), a volume which does not survive. By saying "make lamplighter of me," she means a *spill*, a roll of paper for lighting a lamp.

214

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson — *about 1859*

My "position"!
Cole.

P. S. Lest you misapprehend, the unfortunate insect upon the left is

Myself, while the Reptile upon the *right* is my more immediate friends, and connections.

As ever,
Cole.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 114). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *LL*, where it is reproduced in facsimile facing page 156. The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

Thomas Cole (1801–1848) was a well known American painter, and his name is here used to typify talent in sketching. Pasted above the message is a woodcut clipped from *The New England Primer*. The copy was a reprint made for distribution to all Yale graduates at commencement in 1850. It represents the letter "T" in the alphabet: "Young Timothy/Learnt sin to fly," and shows a youth pursued by an upright wolf-like creature with forked tail. To the note is another attached by Mrs. Bianchi: "Sent over the morning after a revel – when my Grandfather with his lantern appeared suddenly to take Emily home the hour nearing indecent midnight."

215

To Louise Norcross *March 1860*

The little "apple of my eye," is not dearer than Loo; she knows I remember her, – why waste an instant in defence of an absurdity? My birds fly far off, nobody knows where they go to, but you see I know they are coming back, and other people don't, that makes the difference.

I've had a curious winter, very swift, sometimes sober, for I haven't felt well, much, and March amazes me! I didn't think of it, that's all! Your "hay" don't look so dim as it did at one time. I hayed a little for the horse two Sundays ago, and mother thought it was summer, and set one plant out-doors which she brought from the deluge, but it snowed since, and we have fine sleighing, now, on *one* side of the road, and wheeling on the other, a kind of variegated turnpike quite picturesque to see!

You are to have Vinnie, it seems, and I to tear my hair, or engage in any other vocation that seems fitted to me. Well, the earth is round, so if Vinnie rolls your side sometimes, 't isn't strange; I wish I were there too, but the geraniums felt so I couldn't think of leaving them, and one minute carnation pink cried, till I shut her up – see box!

Now, my love, robins, for both of you, and when you and Vinnie sing at sunrise on the apple boughs, just cast your eye to my twig.

Poor Plover.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 230–231; *LL* 208–209; *L* (1931) 216: where it is dated March 1859.

The letter could not have been written in March 1859, since in that year Vinnie had gone to stay with Mrs. Norcross in February (see letter no. 200). In 1860 Vinnie left home in March, and remained with the Norcross family for some weeks (see letter no. 217). The plover is so named because it was said to appear during the rainy season.

216

To Mrs. Samuel Bowles *1860?*

Don't cry, dear Mary. Let us do that for you, because you are too tired now. We don't know how dark it is, but if you are at sea, perhaps when we say that we are there, you won't be as afraid.

The waves are very big, but every one that covers you, covers us, too.

Dear Mary, you can't see us, but we are close at your side. May we comfort you?

Lovingly,

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 198; *L* (1931) 187.

Three Bowles children were stillborn. This note perhaps was written after the third occasion, prior to the birth of Charles, in December 1861.

217

To Lavinia N. Dickinson *late April 1860*

Vinnie –

I can't believe it, when your letters come, saying what Aunt Lavinia said "just before she died." Blessed Aunt Lavinia now; all the world

goes out, and I see nothing but her room, and angels bearing her into those great countries in the blue sky of which we don't know anything.

Then I sob and cry till I can hardly see my way 'round the house again; and then sit still and wonder if she sees us now, if she sees *me*, who said that she "loved Emily." Oh! Vinnie, it is dark and strange to think of summer afterward! How she loved the summer! The birds keep singing just the same. Oh! The thoughtless birds!

Poor little Loo! Poor Fanny! You must comfort them.

If you were with me, Vinnie, we could talk about her together.

And I thought she would live I wanted her to live so, I thought she could not die! To think how still she lay while I was making the little loaf, and fastening her flowers! Did you get my letter in time to tell her how happy I would be to do what she requested? Mr. Brady is coming to-morrow to bring arbutus for her. Dear little aunt! Will she look down? You must tell me all you can think about her. Did she carry my little bouquet? So many broken-hearted people have got to hear the birds sing, and see all the little flowers grow, just the same as if the sun hadn't stopped shining forever! . . . How I wish I could comfort you! How I wish you could comfort me, who weep at what I did not see and never can believe. I will try and share you a little longer, but it is so long, Vinnie.

We didn't think, that morning when I wept that you left me, and you, for other things, that we should weep more bitterly before we saw each other.

Well, she is safer now than "we know or even think." Tired little aunt, sleeping ne'er so peaceful! Tuneful little aunt, singing, as we trust, hymns than which the robins have no sweeter ones.

Good-night, broken hearts, Loo, and Fanny, and Uncle Loring. Vinnie, remember

Sister

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 233–234; *LL* 213–215; *L* (1931) 217–218.

Lavinia stayed on for a short time with her uncle Loring Norcross and the children after her aunt's death on April 17.

218

To Mrs. Horace Ward *about 1860*

Dear Mrs. Ward.

I hope you are not too ill to taste my Punch, and Jelly.

Please accept my love, with Mother's and Vinnie's, and tell us how you are today, through the little Boy.

Your friend,
E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Unpublished.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. The outer fold is endorsed in ink by an unidentified hand (Mr. Ward's?): Mr Horace Ward Esq.

219

To Samuel Bowles *about 1860*

I cant explain it, Mr Bowles.

Two swimmers wrestled on the spar
Until the morning sun,
When one turned, smiling, to the land –
Oh God! the other One!
The stray ships – passing, spied a face
Upon the waters borne,
With eyes, in death, still begging, raised,
And hands – beseeching – thrown!

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 420.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting and from the fact that the same poem is included by ED in one of her packets (HCL) written about this time. The circumstances to which the poem appears to allude have not been identified. But it is clear that about this time she was undergoing a turbulent emotional disturbance (see letters no. 187 and 233). Early in 1862 she in fact made a confidant of Bowles (see letter no. 250).

220

To Samuel Bowles *about 1860*

Dear Mr Bowles.

Thank you.

"Faith" is a fine invention
When Gentlemen can *see* –
But *Microscopes* are prudent
In an Emergency.

You spoke of the "East." I have thought about it this winter.

Dont you think you and I should be shrewder, to take the *Mountain Road*?

That *Bareheaded life* – under the grass – worries one like a Wasp.

The Rose is for Mary.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 200; *L* (1931) 191.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting, but the import of the message remains obscure.

In the Bingham collection (AC) among the poems and letters sent to Bowles is the poem beginning "A feather from the Whippowil." On the inside of the folded sheet is this message:

> Enclosed in this was a sprig of white pine, which I have carefully preserved; I have also laid aside for you a letter of thanks from Clara Pease. You may expect to hear from the children by the next bulletin. I hope you are all well. F. H. C.

The handwriting of the poem places it about 1860. "F. H. C." has not been identified, nor is it clear whether "F. H. C." was an intermediary between ED and Bowles, or one of her correspondents. No correspondent with those initials is known, and since the poem is signed "Emily," one suspects it was intended for Bowles.

221

To Susan Davis Phelps *May 1860*

"When thou goest through the Waters, I will go with thee."

Emilie

MANUSCRIPT: Smith College. Ink. Unpublished. On one outer fold ED wrote: Dear Petite. On the other: Emilie.

Susan Phelps's engagement to Henry V. Emmons was broken on 8 May 1860. The quotation is from Isaiah 43.2: "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee. . ."

222

To Catherine Scott Turner (Anthon) *summer 1860?*

The prettiest of pleas, dear, but with a Lynx like me quite unavailable, – Finding is slow, facilities for losing so frequent in a world like this, I hold with extreme caution, a prudence so astute may seem unnecessary, but plenty moves those most dear, who have been in want, and Saviour tells us, Kate, "the poor are always with us" – Were you ever poor? I *have* been a Beggar, and rich tonight, as by God's leave I believe I am, The "Lazzaroni's" faces haunt, pursue me still! You do not yet "dislimn," Kate, Distinctly sweet your face stands in its phantom niche – I touch your hand – my cheek your cheek – I stroke your vanished hair, Why did you enter, sister, since you must depart? Had not its heart been torn enough but *you* must send your shred? Oh! our Condor Kate! Come from your crags again! Oh: Dew upon the bloom fall yet again a summer's night. Of such have been the friends which have vanquished faces – sown plant by plant the churchyard plats and occasioned angels. – There is a subject dear – on which we never touch, Ignorance of its pageantries does not deter me – I, too went out to meet the "Dust" early in the morning, I, too in Daisy mounds possess hid treasure – therefore I guard you more – You did not tell me you had once been a "Millionaire." Did my sister think that opulence could be mistaken? – Some trinket will remain – some babbling plate or jewel! – I write you from the summer. The murmuring leaves fill up the chinks thro' which the winter red shone, when Kate was here, and Frank was here – and "Frogs" sincerer than our own splash in their Maker's pools – Its but a little past – dear – and yet how far from here it seems – fled with the snow! So through the snow go many loving feet parted by "Alps" how brief from Vineyards and the Sun! – Parents and Vinnie request love to be given Girl –

Emilie –

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text is from a transcript (HCL) made by Mrs. Anthon for Susan Dickinson. Mrs. Anthon made another transcript (AC) for Mrs. Todd. There are slight variations in punctuation.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 148–149; *LL* 212–213; *L* (1931) 145–146.

After Campbell Turner's death in 1857 his widow reverted to her maiden name, and ED seems to have been previously unaware that Kate Scott had been married. Frank Gilbert had been visiting his sister Susan Dickinson on some occasion during the winter here recalled.

223

To Samuel Bowles — *early August 1860*

Dear Mr Bowles.

I am much ashamed. I misbehaved tonight. I would like to sit in the dust. I fear I am your little friend no more, but Mrs Jim Crow.

I am sorry I smiled at women.

Indeed, I revere holy ones, like Mrs Fry and Miss Nightingale. I will never be giddy again. Pray forgive me now: Respect little Bob o' Lincoln again!

My friends are a very few. I can count them on my fingers – and besides, have fingers to spare.

I am gay to see you – because you come so scarcely, else I had been graver.

Good night, God will forgive me – Will you please to *try*?

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Hooker. Ink. Dated: Sunday night. Addressed: Mr Bowles. Unpublished.

Bowles was in Amherst during the week of August 5 to report commencement festivities.

224

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson — *August 1860*

Dear Sue,

God bless you for the Bread! Now – can you spare it? Shall I send it back? Will you have a Loaf of mine – which is spread? Was silly

eno' to cut six, and have three left. Tell me just as it is, and I'll send home your's, or a Loaf of mine, *spread*, you understand –

Great times –

Love for Fanny.

Wish Pope to Rome – that's all –

Emily.

Esqr in parlor –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 61). Pencil. Unpublished.

The date, conjectured from the handwriting, is confirmed by the details in the note, sent next door. Its breathlessness is explained by ED's attempt to organize tea or dinner for her father's guests. The *Springfield Republican* for Thursday, August 9, reports that Governor and Mrs. Banks were guests of Edward Dickinson during commencement, and the references to *pope* and *esquire* are evidently to the governor. The Norcross girls were both in Amherst for at least part of the festivities (see the letter following).

225

To Louise and Frances Norcross *mid-September 1860*

Bravo, Loo, the cape is a beauty, and what shall I render unto Fanny, for all her benefits? I will take my books and go into a corner and give thanks! Do you think I am going "upon the boards" that I wish so smart attire? Such are my designs, though. I beg you not to disclose them! May I not secure Loo for drama, and Fanny for comedy? You are a brace of darlings, and it would give me joy to see you both, in any capacity. . . . Will treasure all till I see you. Never fear that I shall forget! In event of my decease, I will still exclaim "Dr. Thompson," and he will reply, "Miss Montague." My little Loo pined for the hay in her last communication. Not to be saucy, dear, we sha'n't have any more before the first of March, Dick having hid it all in the barn in a most malicious manner; but he has not brought the sunset in, so there is still an inducement to my little girls. We have a sky or two, well worth consideration, and trees so fashionable they make us all *passés*.

I often remember you both, last week. I thought that flown mamma

could not, as was her wont, shield from crowd, and strangers, and was glad Eliza was there. I knew she would guard my children, as she has often guarded me, from publicity, and help to fill the deep place never to be full. Dear cousins, I know you both better than I did, and love you both better, and always I have a chair for you in the smallest parlor in the world, to wit, my heart.

This world is just a little place, just the red in the sky, before the sun rises, so let us keep fast hold of hands, that when the birds begin, none of us be missing.

"Burnham" must think Fanny a scholastic female. I wouldn't be in her place! If she feels delicate about it, she can tell him the books are for a friend in the East Indies.

Won't Fanny give my respects to the "Bell and Everett party" if she passes that organization on her way to school? I hear they wish to make me Lieutenant-Governor's daughter. Were they cats I would pull their tails, but as they are only patriots, I must forego the bliss. . . .

Love to papa.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 234–236; *LL* 215–216; *L* (1931) 218–219.

The phrase "last week," in the beginning of the second paragraph is figurative, for more than a month had elapsed since commencement. The "Bell and Everett party" (John Bell and Edward Everett, respectively candidates for president and vice president on the short-lived Constitutional-Union party) was formed, September 12. Edward Dickinson declined the nomination for lieutenant governor of the state on their ticket, September 18. He was in Boston for the convention, staying with the Norcrosses, when this letter was written. John Dudley brought his fiancée, Eliza Coleman, to commencement in August, and Eliza had evidently chaperoned the Norcross girls, Louise and Frances, now respectively aged eighteen and thirteen. It is assumed that ED first met John Dudley on this occasion. Dr. Joseph P. Thompson had been a commencement speaker, and ED's comment on him suggests that he may have mistaken her for one of the Montague cousins. The Burnham Antique Book Shop was an established Boston store.

226

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *October 1860*

Dear Sue –

You cant think how much I thank you for the Box – Wont you put the things in *this* one – it is'nt half so pretty, you know, but it's such a bother to tip one's duds out –

Thank Sue, *so* much.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 98). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 258.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting and confirmed by the fact that Emily and Lavinia went to visit Eliza Coleman at Middletown, Connecticut, October 19. Lyman Coleman lived there briefly after he left Philadelphia in 1858, before settling in Easton, Pennsylvania, in 1861, where he taught at Lafayette College. Eudocia Flynt, Mrs. Coleman's sister-in-law, met the girls en route to Middletown, according to her diary (in the possession of her granddaughter, Mrs. Raymond W. Jones).

227

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *1860*

How is your little Byron? Hope he gains his foot without losing his genius. Have heard it ably argued that the poet's genius lay in his foot – as the bee's prong and his song are concomitant. Are you stronger than these? To assault so minute a creature seems to me malign, unworthy of Nature – but the frost is no respecter of persons.

I should be glad to be with you, or to open your letter. Blossoms belong to the bee, if needs be by *habeas corpus*.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 174–175; *L* (1931) 168; *LH* 63–64.

The Hollands' baby, Theodore, born in 1859, was operated on in 1860 to correct a congenital trouble with the tendons of one foot.

To Louise Norcross *December 1860?*

Dear Peacock,

I received your feather with profound emotion. It has already surmounted a work, and crossed the Delaware. Doubtless you are moulting *à la* canary bird – hope you will not suffer from the reduction of plumage these December days. The latitude is quite stiff for a few nights, and gentlemen and ladies who go barefoot in our large cities must find the climate uncomfortable. A land of frosts and zeros is not precisely the land for me; hope you find it congenial. I believe it is several hundred years since I met you and Fanny, yet I am pleased to say, you do not become dim; I think you rather brighten as the hours fly. I should love to see you dearly, girls; perhaps I may, before south winds, but I feel rather confused to-day, and the future looks "higglety-pigglety."

You seem to take a smiling view of my finery. If you knew how solemn it was to me, you might be induced to curtail your jests. My sphere is doubtless calicoes, nevertheless I thought it meet to sport a little wool. The mirth it has occasioned will deter me from further exhibitions! Won't you tell "the public" that at present I wear a brown dress with a cape if possible browner, and carry a parasol of the same! We have at present one cat, and twenty-four hens, who do nothing so vulgar as lay an egg, which checks the ice-cream tendency.

I miss the grasshoppers much, but suppose it is all for the best. I should become too much attached to a trotting world.

My garden is all covered up by snow; picked gilliflower Tuesday, now gilliflowers are asleep. The hills take off their purple frocks, and dress in long white nightgowns.

There is something fine and something sad in the year's toilet. . . .

We often talk of you and your father these new winter days. Write, dear, when you feel like it.

Lovingly,

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 238–239; *LL* 224–225; *L* (1931) 221–222.

The month is December, and the tone of the letter suggests that it was written during the first winter after Mrs. Norcross's death. The cape here referred to is probably the one the girls sent to her (see letter no. 225).

229

To Samuel Bowles *about February 1861*

Dear friend.

You remember the little "Meeting" – we held for you – last spring? We met again – Saturday – 'Twas May – when we "adjourned" – but then Adjourns – are all – The meetings wore alike – Mr Bowles – The Topic – did not tire us – so we chose no new – We voted to remember you – so long as both should live – including Immortality. To count you as ourselves – except sometimes more tenderly – as now – when you are ill – and we – the haler of the two – and so I bring the Bond – we sign so many times – for you to read, when Chaos comes – or Treason – or Decay – still witnessing for Morning.

We hope – it is a tri-Hope – composed of Vinnie's – Sue's – and mine – that you took no more pain – riding in the sleigh.

We hope our joy to see you – gave of it's own degree – to you – We pray for your new health – the prayer that goes not down – when they shut the church – We offer you our cups – stintless – as to the Bee – the Lily, her new Liquors –

Would you like Summer? Taste of our's –
Spices? Buy, here!
Ill! We have Berries, for the parching!
Weary! Furloughs of Down!
Perplexed! Estates of Violet – Trouble ne'er looked on!
Captive! We bring Reprieve of Roses!
Fainting! Flasks of Air!
Even for Death – a Fairy Medicine –
But, which is it – Sir?

Emily

Manuscript: AC. Ink.

Publication: *L* (1894) 213–214, in part; *LL* 247, in part; *L* (1931) 201–202, in part.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting, and the occasion sounds as though the girls had had a "Meeting" on Bowles's birthday. In 1861, February 9 occurred on Saturday.

230

To Louise and Frances Norcross *early March 1861?*

Dear Friends,

Loo's note to Miss Whitney only stopped to dine. It went out with a beautiful name on its face in the evening mail. "Is there nothing else," as the clerk says? So pleased to enact a trifle for my little sister. It is little sisters you are, as dear Fanny says in the hallowed note. Could mamma read it, it would blur her light even in Paradise.

It was pretty to lend us the letters from the new friends. It gets us acquainted. We will preserve them carefully. . . . I regret I am not a scholar in the Friday class. I believe the love of God may be taught not to seem like bears. Happy the reprobates under that loving influence.

I have one new bird and several trees of old ones. A snow slide from the roof, dispelled mother's "sweetbrier." You will of course feel for her, as you were named for him! There are as yet no streets, though the sun is riper, and these small bells have rung so long I think it "tea-time" always.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 236; *LL* 216–217; *L* (1931) 220, dated 1860–61.

Loo had enclosed a note to be addressed to Maria Whitney.

231

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about April 1861*

Will Susan please lend Emily "Life in the Iron Mills" – and accept Blossom

from Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 133). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 227.

Rebecca Harding Davis's "Life in the Iron Mills" appeared in the April 1861 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*.

232

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 19 June 1861*

Is it true, dear Sue?
Are there *two*?
I should'nt like to come
For fear of joggling Him!
If I could shut him up
In a Coffee Cup,
Or tie him to a pin
Till I got in –
Or make him fast
To "Toby's" fist –
Hist! Whist! I'd come!
Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 140). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *LL* 53; *Poems* (1955) 156–157.

Edward (Ned) Dickinson, Susan's first child, was born 19 June 1861. Toby was the cat.

233

To recipient unknown *about 1861*

Master.

If you saw a bullet hit a Bird – and he told you he was'nt shot – you might weep at his courtesy, but you would certainly doubt his word.

One drop more from the gash that stains your Daisy's bosom – then would you *believe*? Thomas' faith in Anatomy, was stronger than his faith in faith. God made me – [Sir] Master – I did'nt be – myself. I dont know how it was done. He built the heart in me – Bye and bye it outgrew me – and like the little mother – with the big child – I got

tired holding him. I heard of a thing called "Redemption" – which rested men and women. You remember I asked you for it – you gave me something else. I forgot the Redemption [in the Redeemed – I did'nt tell you for a long time, but I knew you had altered me – I] and was tired – no more – [so dear did this stranger become that were it, or my breath – the Alternative – I had tossed the fellow away with a smile.] I am older – tonight, Master – but the love is the same – so are the moon and the crescent. If it had been God's will that I might breathe where you breathed – and find the place – myself – at night – if I (can) never forget that I am not with you – and that sorrow and frost are nearer than I – if I wish with a might I cannot repress – that mine were the Queen's place – the love of the Plantagenet is my only apology – To come nearer than presbyteries – and nearer than the new Coat – that the Tailor made – the prank of the Heart at play on the Heart – in holy Holiday – is forbidden me – You make me say it over – I fear you laugh – when I do not see – [but] "Chillon" is not funny. Have you the Heart in your breast – Sir – is it set like mine – a little to the left – has it the misgiving – if it wake in the night – perchance – itself to it – a timbrel is it – itself to it a tune?

These things are [reverent] holy, Sir, I touch them [reverently] hallowed, but persons who pray – dare remark [our] "Father"! You say I do not tell you all – Daisy confessed – and denied not.

Vesuvius dont talk – Etna – dont – [Thy] one of them – said a syllable – a thousand years ago, and Pompeii heard it, and hid forever – She could'nt look the world in the face, afterward – I suppose – Bashfull Pompeii! "Tell you of the want" – you know what a leech is, dont you – and [remember that] Daisy's arm is small – and you have felt the horizon hav'nt you – and did the sea – never come so close as to make you dance?

I dont know what you can do for it – thank you – Master – but if I had the Beard on my cheek – like you – and you – had Daisy's petals – and you cared so for me – what would become of you? Could you forget me in fight, or flight – or the foreign land? Could'nt Carlo, and you and I walk in the meadows an hour – and nobody care but the Bobolink – and *his* – a *silver* scruple? I used to think when I died – I could see you – so I died as fast as I could – but the "Corporation" are going Heaven too so [Eternity] wont be sequestered – now [at all] – Say I may wait for you – say I need go with no stranger to the to me –

untried [country] fold – I waited a long time – Master – but I can wait more – wait till my hazel hair is dappled – and you carry the cane – then I can look at my watch – and if the Day is too far declined – we can take the chances [of] for Heaven – What would you do with me if I came "in white?" Have you the little chest to put the Alive – in?

I want to see you more – Sir – than all I wish for in this world – and the wish – altered a little – will be my only one – for the skies.

Could you come to New England – [this summer – could] would you come to Amherst – Would you like to come – Master?

[Would it do harm – yet we both fear God –] Would Daisy disappoint you – no – she would'nt – Sir – it were comfort forever – just to look in your face, while you looked in mine – then I could play in the woods till Dark – till you take me where Sundown cannot find us – and the true keep coming – till the town is full. [Will you tell me if you will?]

I did'nt think to tell you, you did'nt come to me "in white," nor ever told me why,

No Rose, yet felt myself a'bloom,
No Bird – yet rode in Ether.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Words which ED crossed out are here enclosed in brackets; alternative readings are in parentheses.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 422–423, six sentences only, and dated 1885; *L* (1931) 411, six sentences only, and dated "early 60's"; *Home* 422–430, entire, with facsimile in full.

For an earlier "Master" letter, see no. 187. The handwriting is the only clue to the date. This rough draft was left among ED's own papers, and no one knows whether a fair copy was made or sent to the person envisioned as the recipient.

234

To Louise and Frances Norcross *1861?*

. . . Send a sundown for Loo, please, and a crocus for Fanny. Shadow has no stem, so they could not pick him.

. . . D—— fed greedily upon *Harper's Magazine* while here. Suppose he is restricted to Martin Luther's works at home. It is a criminal thing to be a boy in a godly village, but maybe he will be forgiven.

. . . The seeing pain one can't relieve makes a demon of one. If angels have the heart beneath their silver jackets, I think such things could make them weep, but Heaven is so cold! It will never look kind to me that God, who causes all, denies such little wishes. It could not hurt His glory, unless it were a lonesome kind. I 'most conclude it is.

. . . Thank you for the daisy. With nature in my ruche I shall not miss the spring. What would become of us, dear, but for love to reprieve our blunders?

. . . I'm afraid that home is almost done, but do not say I fear so. Perhaps God will be better. They're so happy, you know. That makes it doubtful. Heaven hunts round for those that find itself below, and then it snatches.

. . . Think Emily lost her wits – but she found 'em, likely. Don't part with wits long at a time in this neighborhood.

. . . Your letters are all real, just the tangled road children walked before you, some of them to the end, and others but a little way, even as far as the fork in the road. That Mrs. Browning fainted, we need not read *Aurora Leigh* to know, when she lived with her English aunt; and George Sand "must make no noise in her grandmother's bedroom." Poor children! Women, now, queens, now! And one in the Eden of God. I guess they both forget that now, so who knows but we, little stars from the same night, stop twinkling at last? Take heart, little sister, twilight is but the short bridge, and the moon (morn) stands at the end. If we can only get to her! Yet, if she sees us fainting, she will put out her yellow hands. When did the war really begin?

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 236–238; *LL* 217, 223–224; *L* (1931) 220–221.

These seven extracts are placed together in *Letters* and dated: "Spring, 1861." They cannot be from one letter, for the fourth certainly is addressed to but one recipient. The last extract was written after the death of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 29 June 1861. The Norcross sisters did not show ED's letters to Mrs. Todd; they gave her transcripts of such letters or parts of letters as they chose to select. Frances Norcross was not sure whether ED wrote *moon* or *morn* in the fourth sentence from the end, and entered both.

Aurora Leigh (1856), a romance in blank verse, ED especially liked and often alludes to in her letters. It is Mrs. Browning's vehicle for expressing her views on a variety of subjects, social, literary, and ethical.

To Mrs. Samuel Bowles *about August 1861*

Mary.

I do not know of you, a long while – I remember you – several times – I wish I knew if you kept me? The Dust like the Mosquito, buzzes round my faith.

We are all human – Mary – until we are divine – and to some of us – that is far off, and to some [of] us – near as the lady, ringing at the door – perhaps that's what alarms – I say I will go myself – I cross the river – and climb the fence – now I am at the gate – Mary – now I am in the hall – now I am looking your heart in the Eye!

Did it wait for me – Did it go with the Company? Cruel Company – who have the stocks – and farms – and creeds – and *it* has just it's heart! I hope you are glad – Mary – no pebble in the Brook – today – no film on noon –

I can think how you look – You cant think how I look – I've got more freckles, since you saw me – playing with the schoolboys – then I pare the "Juneating" to make the pie – and get my fingers "tanned."

Summer went very fast – she got as far as the woman from the Hill – who brings the Blueberry – and that is a long way – I shall have no winter this year – on account of the soldiers – Since I cannot weave Blankets, or Boots – I thought it best to omit the season – Shall present a "Memorial" to God – when the Maples turn –

Can I rely on your "name"?

How is your garden – Mary? Are the Pinks true – and the Sweet Williams faithful? I've got a Geranium like a Sultana – and when the Humming birds come down – Geranium and I shut our eyes – and go far away –

Ask "Meme" – if I shall catch her a Butterfly with a vest like a Turk? I will – if she will build him a House in her "Morning – Glory." Vinnie would send her love, but she put on a white frock, and went to meet tomorrow – a few minutes ago. Mother would send her love – but she is in the "Eave spout," sweeping up a leaf, that blew in, last November. Austin would send his – but he dont live here – now – He married – and went East.

I brought my own – myself, to you and Mr Bowles. Please remember me, because I remember you – Always.

My River runs to thee –
Blue Sea! Wilt welcome me?
My River waits reply –
Oh Sea – look graciously –
I'll fetch thee Brooks
From spotted nooks –
Say – Sea –
Take *Me*!

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 196–197; *LL* 219–220; *L* (1931) 185–186.
Mary Bowles, now seven years old, was called "Mamie" by her family, but ED's spelling is clearly "Meme."

236

To Mary Warner Crowell *about August 1861*

Dear Mary –
You might not know I remembered you, unless I told you so –
Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 34). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *Mount Holyoke Alumnae Quarterly* XXIX (1946) 130.
The handwriting is that of 1861. Mary Warner married Edward C. Crowell on 13 August 1861.

237

To Edward S. Dwight *September 1861*

Will little Ned lay these on Mama's pillow?
Softly – not to wake her!
Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Unpublished.
The Reverend Edward S. Dwight resigned his pastorate in the First Church at Amherst during August 1860, because of his wife's illness. She died 11 September 1861 at Gorham, Maine. This note seems to have accompanied flowers sent at the time of her funeral. Edward (Ned) Huntington Dwight was five years old.

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *summer 1861*

Safe in their Alabaster Chambers,
Untouched by morning
And untouched by noon,
Sleep the meek members of the Resurrection,
Rafter of satin
And Roof of stone.

Light laughs the breeze
In her Castle above them,
Babbles the Bee in a stolid Ear,
Pipe the Sweet Birds in ignorant cadence,–
Ah, what sagacity perished here!

[The earlier version, above, ED sent to Sue during the summer of 1861. Sue appears to have objected to the second stanza, for ED sent her the following:]

Safe in their Alabaster Chambers,
Untouched by Morning–
And untouched by Noon–
Lie the meek members of the Resurrection–
Rafter of Satin–and Roof of Stone–

Grand go the Years–in the Crescent–about them–
Worlds scoop their Arcs–
And Firmaments–row–
Diadems–drop–and Doges–surrender–
Soundless as dots–on a Disc of Snow–

Perhaps this verse would please you better–Sue–

Emily–

[The new version elicited an immediate response:]

I am not suited dear Emily with the second verse–It is remarkable as the chain lightening that blinds us hot nights in the Southern sky

but it does not go with the ghostly shimmer of the first verse as well as the other one – It just occurs to me that the first verse is complete in itself it needs no other, and can't be coupled – Strange things always go alone – as there is only one Gabriel and one Sun – You never made a peer for that verse, and I *guess* you[r] kingdom does'nt hold one – I always go to the fire and get warm after thinking of it, but I never *can* again – The flowers are sweet and bright and look as if they would kiss one – ah, they expect a humming-bird – Thanks for them of course – and not thanks only recognition either – Did it ever occur to you that is all there is here after all – "Lord that I may receive my sight" –

Susan is tired making *bibs* for her bird – her ring-dove – he will paint my cheeks when I am old to pay me –

Sue –

Pony Express

[ED answered thus:]

Is *this frostier?*

Springs – shake the sills –
But – the Echoes – stiffen –
Hoar – is the Window –
And numb – the Door –
Tribes of Eclipse – in Tents of Marble –
Staples of Ages – have buckled – there –

Dear Sue –

Your praise is good – to me – because I *know* it *knows* – and *suppose* – it *means* –

Could I make you and Austin – proud – sometime – a great way off – 'twould give me taller feet –

Here is a crumb – for the "Ring dove" – and a spray for *his Nest*, a little while ago – *just* – "*Sue.*"

Emily.

MANUSCRIPTS: HCL (B 74a, 74b, 74c, and 203d). All are ink except 74a.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 164, in part; *Poems* (1955) 151–155, where the story of the development of the poem is told in full, but with portions of the letters – touching upon the infant Ned – omitted.

239

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1861*

Could *I* – then – shut the door –
Lest *my* beseeching face – at last –
Rejected – be – of *Her*?

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 125). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 255; *Poems* (1955) 158.
The tension which developed between ED and Sue, when the infant Ned began to absorb Sue's attention, is hinted at in this note, which is in the handwriting of about 1861.

240

To Austin Dickinson *about 1861*

Austin –

Father said Frank Conkey – touched you –

A Burdock – clawed my Gown –
Not *Burdock's* – blame –
But *mine* –
Who went too near
The Burdock's *Den* –

A *Bog* – affronts my shoe –
What *else* have Bogs – *to do* –
The only Trade they *know* –
The *splashing Men*!
Ah, *pity* – *then*!

'Tis *Minnows can despise*!
The *Elephant's* – calm eyes
Look *further on*!

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.
PUBLICATION: *Poems* (1955) 165–166.
The date is conjectured from the handwriting. There was keen political rivalry between Edward Dickinson, a "straight" Whig, and Ithamar Francis Conkey, a "republican" Whig. ED evidently thought that Austin had been "touched" by Conkey's political thinking.

241

To Samuel Bowles *October 1861*

Perhaps you thought I did'nt care – because I stayed out, yesterday, I *did* care, Mr Bowles. I pray for your sweet health – to "Alla" – every morning – but something troubled me – and I knew you needed light – and air – so I did'nt come. Nor have I the conceit that you *noticed* me – but I could'nt bear that you, or Mary, so gentle to me – should think me forgetful – It's little, at the most – we can do for our's, and we must do that – flying – or our things are *flown*! Dear friend, I wish you were well –

It grieves me till I cannot speak, that you are suffering. Wont you come back? Cant I bring you something? My little Balm might be *o'erlooked* by wiser eyes – you know – Have you tried the Breeze that swings the Sign – or the Hoof of the Dandelion? *I* own 'em – Wait for *mine*!

This is all that I have to say – Kinsmen need say nothing – but "Swiveller" may be sure of the

"Marchioness."

Love for Mary.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 202; *LL* 230; *L* (1931) 192–193.

During the autumn of 1861 Bowles became a patient at Dr. Denniston's water-cure in Northampton, and in October he visited the Dickinsons several times. He was suffering from sciatica. Dick Swiveller and the "Marchioness" (the drudge who in the end marries Dick) are characters in Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop*. ED's signature to the letter may well be a descriptive term which Bowles had jokingly applied to her when she had refused to see him.

242

To Samuel Bowles *early December 1861*

Dear Mr Bowles.

It grieves us – that in near Northampton – we have now – no friend – and the old-foreigner-look blurs the Hills – *that* side – It will be brav-

est news – when our friend is well – tho' "Business" leaves but little place for the sweeter sort.

The hallowing – of pain – makes one afraid to convalesce – because they differ – wide – as *Engines* – and *Madonnas*. We trust no City give our friend – the "Helena" feeling.

The Cages – do not suit the *Swiss* – well as steeper Air.

I think the Father's Birds do not all carol at a time – to prove the *cost* of *Music* – not doubting at the last each Wren shall bear it's "Palm" –

To take the pearl – costs Breath – but then a pearl is not impeached – let it strike the East!

Dear Mr Bowles – We told you we did not learn to pray – but then our freckled bosom bears it's friends – in it's own way – to a simpler sky – and many's the time we leave their pain with the "Virgin Mary."

Jesus! thy Crucifix
Enable thee to guess
The smaller size –

Jesus! thy *second* face
Mind thee – in Paradise –
Of Our's.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Hooker. Ink. Unpublished.

Bowles was not entirely cured of his sciatica when he left Northampton to take Mrs. Bowles to New York to be under a doctor's care before the birth of Charles in mid-December.

243

To Edward S. Dwight *December 1861*

Dear friend.

We thought for sorrow – perhaps you had rather no one talk – but we had rather go away – when our friend is *glad* – We never like to leave the eye that is full of tears – and if too – it be one that always looked so kind on us – that makes it harder – I suppose your friend – the Stranger – can comfort more than all of us – but that is Dusk – to

me – and so I knock tonight – on that far study door – that used to open kindly – but if you'd rather see no one – you need not say "Come in."

Upon these winter nights – I have much recollection of evenings passed with you – and her – at the "parsonage" – and the fire crackles – still – and her cheek softly reddens – as we talk – and laugh – and then I strain my eyes to that low sleep – she takes – and something bars my throat. I presume it is better – where she is – and holier – and safer – but then I like my little friend where I can see it's face, and *that's* so far –

I took her notes – today – I had a tiny pacquet – prompted by gentle gratitudes for trifling favor done – I held them to my lips – I put them in my breast – to see if I could warm them – and then the tears fell so – I feared that they would blot them out – as they were but in pencil – and so I laid them back. These – and the little Tennyson – in which she wrote my name – are all I have of her – yet of so sweet a life all – is memorial – and I – to her remembrance – as to a timid portrait – the *lady* – quite transfigured – now – turn every day – I think it sad to have a friend – it's sure to break the Heart so – and yet – if it had none – the Heart must seek another trade.

I hope that Annie and Ned – are well – Tell them – the lady who loved Mama – could not forget *them* –

Father and Mother talk of you – with frequent affection – and when you shall please – will always be happy to see you.

Mr and Mrs Sweetser – too – bear you in strong remembrance – and many more – I doubt not, whom I do not meet. I hope Mrs Waterman is well – please give her my love, and tell her I will remember her daughter.

Affy,
Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Unpublished.

Although this letter speaks of winter nights, it seems to have been written earlier than the one written to Mr. Dwight on 2 January 1862 (no. 246). The Sweetsers here mentioned were probably Mr. and Mrs. Luke Sweetser, near neighbors of the Dickinsons. Mrs. Waterman was the mother of the late Mrs. Dwight. The location of the Tennyson volume is not known.

244

To Mrs. Samuel Bowles *about 20 December 1861*

Dear Mary –

Can you leave *your* flower long enough – just to look at *mine*?

Which is the prettiest? I shall tell for myself – some day – I *used* to come – to *comfort* you – but *now* – to tell you how glad I am – and how glad we all are – I wish it were a lady – for then – it would be just big enough – to waltz – with Austin's little Boy – but they can play Ball – together – and that will do as well! You must not stay in New York – any more – you must come back – now – and bring the Blanket to Massachusetts – where we can all look. What a responsible shepherd – Four lambs – in it's flock! Shall you be glad to see us – or shall we seem old-fashioned – by the face in the crib?

Tell him – I've got a pussy – for him – with a spotted Gown – and a Dog – with Ringlets –

We have very cold days – since you went away – and I think you hear the wind blow, far as the Brevoort House – it comes from so far – and crawls so – Dont let it blow Baby away – will you call him Robert – for me. He is the bravest man – alive – but *his* Boy – has no mama – *that* makes us all weep – dont it?

Good night – Mary –

Emily.

Manuscript: AC. Ink. It still shows the marks of a once-enclosed flower.

Publication: *L* (1894) 195; *LL* 218; *L* (1931) 189; in part.

The *Springfield Republican* announced on December 20: "At the Brevoort House, New York, 19th, a son to Samuel Bowles of this city." Elizabeth Barrett Browning died in June 1861.

245

To Louise Norcross *31 December 1861*

. . . Your letter didn't surprise me, Loo; I brushed away the sleet from eyes familiar with it – looked again to be sure I read it right – and then took up my work hemming strings for mother's gown. I think

I hemmed them faster for knowing you weren't coming, my fingers had nothing else to do. . . . Odd, that I, who say "no" so much, cannot bear it from others. Odd, that I, who run from so many, cannot brook that one turn from me. Come when you will, Loo, the hearts are never shut here. I don't remember "May." Is that the one that stands next April? And is that the month for the river-pink?

Mrs. Adams had news of the death of her boy to-day, from a wound at Annapolis. Telegram signed by Frazer Stearns. You remember him. Another one died in October – from fever caught in the camp. Mrs. Adams herself has not risen from bed since then. "Happy new year" step softly over such doors as these! "Dead! Both her boys! One of them shot by the sea in the East, and one of them shot in the West by the sea." . . . Christ be merciful! Frazer Stearns is just leaving Annapolis. His father has gone to see him to-day. I hope that ruddy face won't be brought home frozen. Poor little widow's boy, riding to-night in the mad wind, back to the village burying-ground where he never dreamed of sleeping! Ah! the dreamless sleep!

Did you get the letter I sent a week from Monday? You did not say, and it makes me anxious, and I sent a scrap for Saturday last, that too? Loo, I wanted you very much, and I put you by with sharper tears than I give to many. Won't you tell me about the chills – what the doctor says? I must not lose you, sweet. Tell me if I could send a tuft to keep the cousin warm, a blanket of a thistle, say, or something!

Much love and Christmas, and sweet year, for you and Fanny and papa.

Emilie.

Dear little Fanny's note received, and shall write her soon.
Meanwhile, we wrap her in our heart to keep her tight and warm.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 239–241; *LL* 225–226, in part; *L* (1931) 222–224.

Sylvester H. Adams died at Annapolis, 31 December 1861, of typhoid fever. Frazar Stearns was the son of President Stearns of Amherst. He was killed in March of the following year (see letter no. 255).

VII

LETTERS

246–313

[1862–1865]

Perhaps you smile at me.
I could not stop for that –
My Business is Circumference.

[1862–1865]

The most crucial and — though she could not know it — historically eventful year in Emily Dickinson's life was 1862. She was undergoing an emotional disturbance of such magnitude that she feared for her reason. At the same time she had developed her poetic sensibilities to a degree that impelled her to write Thomas Wentworth Higginson in April to learn what a professional man of letters might have to say about her verses. In no other year did she ever write so much poetry.

There is no direct evidence that the Reverend Charles Wadsworth was the man with whom she fell in love, but the circumstantial evidence is impressive that such was true, and is at no point contradicted by other evidence.

By far the most important correspondence in these years are the letters to Higginson and to Samuel Bowles. She clearly made Bowles a confidant in the matter which touched her heart most closely, and when Higginson had made certain by midsummer 1862 that in his opinion her verses were not for publication, she continued to write him because his interest in her thoughts and her writing was genuine, and his concern somehow gave her the curative she sought. "You were not aware," she wrote him seven years later, "that you saved my Life."

The nature of the eye affliction which required a specialist's attention is not known, but her eyesight was not seriously impaired (she never wore glasses), and during the months she spent in Boston in 1864 and 1865 she continued to write both poems and letters.

The letters of this group are the most moving of all, for they reveal the pathos of unrequited yearning and the assurance of a mature artist who cannot expect fame in her lifetime.

246

To Edward S. Dwight — *2 January 1862*

Dear friend.

I made the mistake – and was just about to recall the note – *misenveloped* to you – and *your's* – to the other friend – which I just knew – when my "Sister's" face – put this world from mind – nor should I mention it – except the familiar address – must have surprised your taste – I have the friend who loves me – and thinks me larger than I am – and to reduce a Glamour, innocently caused – I sent the little Verse to *Him*. Your gentle answer – undeserved, I more thank you for.

My little Sister's face – so dear – so unexpected – filled my eyes with the old rain – and I hid my face in my apron – my only shelter – now she sleeps – and wondered why a love was given – but just to tear away – I cared for Her – so long – she spoiled me for a ruder love – and other women – seem to me bristling – and very loud.

Do you remember telling me that I "should soon forget you both?" You did not mean to deceive me – but you made the *mistake*! If you please – I remember *more* – and *not* "less" – as you said. You thought the portrait "might remind me of my former friend."

I trust she is more my friend – today – when I cannot see her – and learn it from her own sweet lips.

The World is not the *shape* it was – when I went to your House – a little tipsy – maybe – that I could have a friend – so near – who found them at rare distances – as *Mints* – and *precious stones* – but I will not review a time – that cuts – at every step. You were very thoughtful – to send me the face – How tenderly I thank you – it's preciousness to you – will tell. It is exquisitely like her – we all think – and at Austin's – where it was borne in a little basket – through the storm – last night.

I do not ask if you are "better" – because split lives – never "get well" – but the love of friends – sometimes helps the Staggering – when the Heart has on it's great freight.

Dear friend – I read the verse – You must not deny your little Church – who "called" no pastor – yet – Again – I thank you for the

face – her memory did not need –

Sufficient troth – that she will rise –
Deposed – at last – the Grave –
To that *new* fondness – Justified –
by Calvaries of love –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Amherst. Envelope addressed: Rev Edward S. Dwight./Gorham./Maine. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Jan 3 1862. Unpublished.

ED had reversed the contents of envelopes posted about the same time in December, one to Dwight and one to the (unidentified) friend who "thinks me larger than I am." Dwight replied, enclosing a verse and a photograph of his late wife. This letter, which acknowledges Dwight's, concludes with the final stanza of "There came a Day at Summer's full," adapted to the memory of Mrs. Dwight.

247

To Samuel Bowles *about 11 January 1862*

Dear friend.

Are you willing? I am so far from Land – To offer *you* the cup – it might some Sabbath come *my* turn – Of wine how solemn – full!

Did you get the Doubloons – did you vote upon "Robert"? You said you would come in "Febuary." Only three weeks more to wait at the Gate!

While you are sick – we – are homesick – Do you look out tonight? The Moon rides like a Girl – through a Topaz Town – I dont think we shall ever be merry again – you are ill so long –

When did the Dark happen?

I skipped a page – tonight – because I come so often – now – I might have tired you.

That page is fullest – tho'. Vinnie sends her love. I think Father and Mother care a great deal for you – and hope you may be well. When you tire with pain – to know that eyes would cloud, in Amherst – might that comfort – *some*?

Emily.

We never forget Mary –

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 199; *LL* 226; *L* (1931) 190.

If ED is literal in her time reckoning, she wrote this letter on Saturday, January 11. The Bowleses were still in New York. The opening paragraph suggests that she enclosed a poem, perhaps one intended to reveal something of a personal nature.

248

To recipient unknown *early 1862?*

Oh, did I offend it – [Did'nt it want me to tell it the truth] Daisy – Daisy – offend it – who bends her smaller life to his (it's) meeker (lower) every day – who only asks – a task – [who] something to do for love of it – some little way she cannot guess to make that master glad –

A love so big it scares her, rushing among her small heart – pushing aside the blood and leaving her faint (all) and white in the gust's arm –

Daisy – who never flinched thro' that awful parting, but held her life so tight he should not see the wound – who would have sheltered him in her childish bosom (Heart) – only it was'nt big eno' for a Guest so large – *this* Daisy – grieve her Lord – and yet it (she) often blundered – Perhaps she grieved (grazed) his taste – perhaps her odd – Backwoodsman [life] ways [troubled] teased his finer nature (sense). Daisy [fea] knows all that – but must she go unpardoned – teach her, preceptor grace – teach her majesty – Slow (Dull) at patrician things – Even the wren upon her nest learns (knows) more than Daisy dares –

Low at the knee that bore her once unto [royal] wordless rest [now] Daisy [stoops a] kneels a culprit – tell her her [offence] fault – Master – if it is [not so] small eno' to cancel with her life, [Daisy] she is satisfied – but punish [do not] dont banish her – shut her in prison, Sir – only pledge that you will forgive – sometime – before the grave, and Daisy will not mind – She will awake in [his] your likeness.

Wonder stings me more than the Bee – who did never sting me – but made gay music with his might wherever I [may] [should] did go – Wonder wastes my pound, you said I had no size to spare –

You send the water over the Dam in my brown eyes –

I've got a cough as big as a thimble – but I dont care for that – I've got a Tomahawk in my side but that dont hurt me much. [If you] Her master stabs her more –

Wont he come to her – or will he let her seek him, never minding [whatever] so long wandering [out] if to him at last.

Oh how the sailor strains, when his boat is filling – Oh how the dying tug, till the angel comes. Master – open your life wide, and take me in forever, I will never be tired – I will never be noisy when you want to be still. I will be [glad] [as the] your best little girl – nobody else will see me, but you – but that is enough – I shall not want any more – and all that Heaven only will disappoint me – will be because it's not so dear

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Penciled rough draft.

PUBLICATION: *Home* 430–431.

The alternative suggested changes are placed in parentheses; words crossed out, in brackets. Like the earlier "Master" letters (nos. 187 and 233) this draft was among ED's papers at the time of her death. Whether a fair copy was made and sent, or intended to be sent, is not known. Accurate dating is impossible. The letter may have been written earlier, but the characteristics of the handwriting make the present assignment reasonable.

248a

[*Charles Wadsworth to ED*]

My Dear Miss Dickenson

I am distressed beyond measure at your note, received this moment, – I can only imagine the affliction which has befallen, or is now befalling you.

Believe me, be what it may, you have all my sympathy, and my constant, earnest prayers.

I am very, very anxious to learn more definitely of your trial – and though I have no right to intrude upon your sorrow yet I beg you to write me, though it be but a word.

In great haste
Sincerely and most
Affectionately *Yours* ——

MANUSCRIPT: AC. It is unsigned and without date, but is in the handwriting of the Reverend Charles Wadsworth, with an embossed crest "C W."

PUBLICATION: *Home* 369–372, with facsimile reproduction.

This solicitous pastoral letter is placed here because it thus follows the last of the "Master" letters, and because the present assumption is that ED thought of Wadsworth as "Master." Actually the letter may have been written at a quite different time.

249

To Samuel Bowles *early 1862*

Dear friend.

If I amaze[d] your kindness – My Love is my only apology. To the people of "Chillon" – this – is enoug[h] I have met – no othe[rs.] Would you – ask le[ss] for your *Queen* – M[r] Bowles?

Then – I mistake – [my] scale – To Da[?] 'tis *daily* – to be gran[ted] and not a "Sunday Su[m] [En]closed – is my [d]efence –

[F]orgive the Gills that ask for Air – if it is harm – to breathe!

To *"thank" you* – [s]hames my thought!

[Sh]ould you but fail [at] – Sea –
[In] sight of me –
[Or] doomed lie –
[Ne]xt Sun – to die –
[O]r rap – at Paradise – unheard
I'd *harass God*
Until he let [you] in!

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Hooker. Ink. Outside edges torn away. Unpublished except for the poem, which is in *Poems* (1955) 162, and there dated 1861. There can be no exact date assigned. Here the letter is moved somewhat ahead, since the letter seems to be part of a sequence that ED wrote Bowles between January and early April, when he sailed for Europe.

250

To Samuel Bowles *early 1862*

Title divine – is mine!
The Wife – without the Sign!
Acute Degree – conferred on me –
Empress of Calvary!
Royal – all but the Crown!
Betrothed – without the swoon
God sends us Women –
When you – hold – Garnet to Garnet –
Gold – to Gold –
Born – Bridalled – Shrouded –
In a Day –
"My Husband" – women say –
Stroking the Melody –
Is *this* – the way?

Here's – what I had to "tell you" –
You will tell no other? Honor – is it's
own pawn –

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *Poems* (1955) 758. A variant of the poem, sent to Susan Dickinson about the same time, was first published in *LL* 49–50.

The phrase "Honor is it's own pawn" ED used again, to conclude her first letter to Higginson, written on 15 April 1862 (no. 260).

251

To Samuel Bowles *early 1862*

Dear friend

If you doubted my Snow – for a moment – you never will – again – I know –

Because I could not say it – I fixed it in the Verse – for you to read – when your thought wavers, for such a foot as mine –

Through the strait pass of suffering –
The Martyrs – even – trod.
Their feet – upon Temptation –
Their faces – upon God –

A stately – shriven – Company –
Convulsion – playing round –
Harmless – as streaks of Meteor –
Upon a Planet's Bond –

Their faith – the everlasting troth –
Their Expectation – fair –
The Needle – to the North Degree –
Wades – so – thro' polar Air!

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *Poems* (1955) 598. Another copy of the poem only furnished the text first published in 1891.

In *Poems* (1955) the letter is dated 1863. Since this group of notes and poems to Bowles can be dated by handwriting only, no date can be surely assigned. It cannot be said with assurance that this letter follows no. 250, but it certainly is an attempt to make her position clear, a position which the preceding letter makes ambiguous.

252

To Samuel Bowles *early 1862*

Dear Mr Bowles.

I cant thank you any more – You are thoughtful so many times, you grieve me *always – now*. The old words are *numb* – and there *a'nt* any *new* ones – Brooks – are useless – in *Freshet-time* –

When you come to Amherst, please God it were *Today* – I will tell you about the picture – if I *can*, I will –

"Speech" – is a prank of *Parliament* –
"Tears" – a trick of the *nerve* –
But the Heart with the heaviest freight on –
Does'nt – always – move –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 210–211; *LL* 244; *L* (1931) 200.

ED's gratitude for Bowles's sympathetic understanding is thus acknowledged.

253

To Mrs. Samuel Bowles *early March 1862*

Dear Mary –

Could you leave "Charlie" – long enough? Have you time for *me*? I sent Mr Bowles – a little note – last Saturday morning – asking him – to do an errand for me –

I forgot he was going to Washington – or I should'nt have troubled him – so late – Now – Mary – I fear he did not get it – and *you* tried to do the errand for me – and it troubled you – *Did* it? Will you tell me? Just say with your pencil – "it did'nt tire me – Emily" – and then – I shall be sure – for with all your care – I would not have taxed you – for the world –

You never refused me – Mary – you cherished me – many times – but I thought it must seem so selfish – to ask the favor of Mr Bowles – just as he went from Home – only I *forgot* that –

Tell me – *tonight* – just a word – Mary – with your own hand – so I shall know I harassed none – and I will be *so* glad –

Austin told us of Charlie. I send a Rose – for his small hands.

Put it in – when he goes to sleep – and then he will dream of Emily – and when you bring him to Amherst – we shall be "old friends."

Dont love him so well – you know – as to forget us – We shall wish he was'nt *there* – if you do – I'm afraid – *shant* we?

I'll remember you – if you like me to – while Mr. Bowles is gone – and that will stop the lonely – *some* – but I cannot agree to *stop* – when he gets home from Washington.

Good night – Mary –

You wont forget my little note – *tomorrow* – in the mail – It will be the *first one* – you ever wrote me – in your life – and yet – was I the little friend – a *long time*? *Was* I – Mary?

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Dated: Sunday night.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 201–202; *L* (1931) 192.
Samuel Bowles left for Washington about 1 March.

254

To Frances Norcross *March 1862?*

Dear Fanny,

I fear you are getting as driven as Vinnie. We consider her standard for superhuman effort erroneously applied. Dear Loo remembers the basket Vinnie "never got to." But we must blame with lenience. Poor Vinnie has been very sick, and so have we all, and I feared one day our little brothers would see us no more, but God was not so hard. Now health looks so beautiful, the tritest "How do you do" is living with meaning. No doubt you "heard a bird," but which route did he take? Hasn't reached here yet. Are you sure it wasn't a "down brakes"? Best of ears will blunder! Unless he come by the first of April, I shan't countenance him. We have had fatal weather – thermometer two below zero all day, without a word of apology. Summer was always dear, but such a kiss as she'll get from me if I ever see her again, will make her cry, I know. . . .

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 241–242; *LL* 228; *L* (1931) 224.
The text is dated "February 1862" by Mrs. Todd, but ED speaks of April as if it were the next month, and such cold as they had not expected.

255

To Louise and Frances Norcross *late March 1862*

Dear Children,

You have done more for me – 'tis least that I can do, to tell you of brave Frazer – "killed at Newbern," darlings. His big heart shot away by a "minie ball."

I had read of those – I didn't think that Frazer would carry one to Eden with him. Just as he fell, in his soldier's cap, with his sword at

his side, Frazer rode through Amherst. Classmates to the right of him, and classmates to the left of him, to guard his narrow face! He fell by the side of Professor Clark, his superior officer – lived ten minutes in a soldier's arms, asked twice for water – murmured just, "My God!" and passed! Sanderson, his classmate, made a box of boards in the night, put the brave boy in, covered with a blanket, rowed six miles to reach the boat, – so poor Frazer came. They tell that Colonel Clark cried like a little child when he missed his pet, and could hardly resume his post. They loved each other very much. Nobody here could look on Frazer – not even his father. The doctors would not allow it.

The bed on which he came was enclosed in a large casket shut entirely, and covered from head to foot with the sweetest flowers. He went to sleep from the village church. Crowds came to tell him goodnight, choirs sang to him, pastors told how brave he was – early-soldier heart. And the family bowed their heads, as the reeds the wind shakes.

So our part in Frazer is done, but you must come next summer, and we will mind ourselves of this young crusader – too brave that he could fear to die. We will play his tunes – maybe he can hear them; we will try to comfort his broken-hearted Ella, who, as the clergyman said, "gave him peculiar confidence." . . . Austin is stunned completely. Let us love better, children, it's most that's left to do.

Love from

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 242–244; *LL* 228–229; *L* (1931) 224–226.

Lieutenant Frazar A. Stearns, son of President Stearns of Amherst, was killed at Newbern (N. C.), 14 March. The funeral was held in Amherst on 22 March.

256

To Samuel Bowles *late March 1862*

Dear friend.

Will you be kind to *Austin* – again? And would you be kinder than sometimes – and put the name – on – too – He tells me to tell you

– He could not thank you – Austin is disappointed – He expected to see you – today –

He is sure you wont go to Sea – without first speaking to Him. I presume if Emily and Vinnie knew of his writing – they would entreat Him to ask you – not –

Austin is chilled – by Frazer's murder – He says – his Brain keeps saying over "Frazer is killed" – "Frazer is killed," just as Father told it – to Him. Two or three words of lead – that dropped so deep, they keep weighing –

Tell Austin – how to get over them!

He is very sorry you are not better – He cares for you – when at the Office – and afterwards – too – at Home – and sometimes – wakes at night, with a worry for you – he did'nt finish – quite – by Day – He would not like it – that I betrayed Him – so you'll never tell. And I must betray Sue – too –

Do not think it dishonorable –

I found out – accidentally – that *she* – was trying to find out – if you had a little *Drinking Flask* – to take abroad with you – I would like to serve – Sue – and if you will tell *me* by Monday's mail – whether you have one – and promise me – for *her sake – not to get one* – if you hav'nt – I can fix the *telling her* –

Mary sent beautiful flowers. Did she tell – you?

Austin hopes his errand will not tire you.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 202–203, in part; *LL* 230–231, in part; *L* (1931) 193–194, in part.

This letter, which apparently enclosed another letter for Bowles to forward to somebody, uses Austin's name throughout as a cover.

Bowles was planning to sail for Europe early in April. He evidently replied that he did not have a flask (see letter no. 259).

257

To Samuel Bowles — *late March 1862?*

Dear Mr Bowles.

Victory comes late,
And is held low to freezing lips

Too rapt with frost
To mind it!
How sweet it would have tasted!
Just a drop!
Was God so economical?
His table's spread too high
Except we dine on tiptoe!
Crumbs fit such little mouths –
Cherries – suit *Robins* –
The Eagle's golden breakfast – *dazzles them*!
God keep his vow to *"Sparrows,"*
Who of little love – know how to starve!

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Hooker. Ink.

PUBLICATION: Poems (1955) 533–534. A variant of the poem was first published in 1891. There is no stanza break.

The dating of the letter is based solely upon handwriting, and in *Poems* (1955) is assigned to the year 1861. It may indeed have been written in either 1861 or 1862. It is possible that the poem is associated with the death of Frazar Stearns. The event was especially shocking to all who knew him. Samuel Bowles wrote to Austin and Susan Dickinson (HCL – Dickinson collection): ". . . and then the news from Newbern took away all the remaining life. I did not care for victory, for anything now." (Newbern was a Union victory.)

258

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *early 1862*

Dear Sue,

Your – Riches – taught me – poverty!
Myself, a "Millionaire"
In little – wealths – as Girls can boast –
Till broad as "Buenos Ayre" –
You drifted your Dominions –
A Different – Peru –
And I esteemed – all – poverty –
For Life's Estate – with you!

Of "Mines" – I little know – myself –
But just the *names* – of *Gems* –
The *Colors* – of the *Commonest* –
And scarce of Diadems –
So much – that did I meet *the Queen* –
Her glory – I should know –
But *this* – must be a *different Wealth* –
To miss it – beggars – so!

I'm sure 'tis *"India"* – all day –
To those who look on you –
Without a stint – without a blame –
Might I – but be the Jew!
I know it is "Golconda" –
Beyond my power to dream –
To have a smile – for mine – each day –
How *better* – than a *Gem*!

At least – it solaces – to know –
That there *exists* – a *Gold* –
Altho' I prove it, just in time –
It's distance – to behold!
It's far – far – Treasure – to surmise –
And estimate – the Pearl –
That slipped – my simple fingers – thro'
While yet a Girl – at School!

Dear Sue –

You see I remember –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 44). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 228, with poem omitted; *Poems* (1955) 220–221.

George Frisbie Whicher suggested that this poem might have been written in memory of Benjamin Franklin Newton, the early friend who ED said taught her immortality (*This Was a Poet* 92). The handwriting is certainly that of letters known to be written early in 1862, and Whicher's conjecture is plausible; the ninth anniversary of Newton's death was 24 March 1862. On the other hand the poem may not be an elegy, but written about a person living whom ED feels that she has lost, perhaps

Sue herself. Such indeed seems to have been her feeling about Sue at this time (see T. H. Johnson, *Emily Dickinson: An Interpretive Biography* 38–41).

Another poem which ED sent to Sue in 1862 or 1863 is the one beginning "The Love a Child can show – below" (*Poems*, 1955, 520–521). It is headed "*Excuse* me – Dollie –" and is signed "Emily." The occasion that prompted it is not known.

259

To Samuel Bowles *early April 1862*

Dear friend.

The Hearts in Amherst – ache – tonight – You could not know how hard – They thought they could not wait – last night – until the Engine – sang – a pleasant tune – that time – because that you were coming – The flowers waited – in the Vase – and love got peevish, watching – A Rail Road person, rang, to bring an evening paper – Vinnie tipped Pussy – over – in haste to let you in – and I, for Joy – and Dignity – held tight in my chair – My Hope put out a petal –

You would come – today – but Sue and Vinnie, and I, keep the time, in tears – We dont *believe* it – *now* – "Mr Bowles – not coming"! *Would'nt* you – *tomorrow* – and this be but a *bad Dream – gone by – next morning*?

Please do not take our *spring* – away – since you blot Summer – out! We cannot *count* – our tears – for this – because they drop so fast – and the Black eye – and the Blue eye – and a Brown – I know – hold their lashes full – Part – will go to see you – I cannot tell how many – now – It's too hard – to plan – yet – and Susan's little "Flask" – *poor* Susan – who doted so on putting it in your own hand –

Dear friend – we meant to make *you* – brave – but moaned – before we thought. If we should play 'twas *Austin* – perhaps we could'nt let *him* go – to do Goodnight – to you – If you'll be sure and get well – we'll try to bear it – If we could only care – the less – it would be so much easier – Your letter, troubled my throat. It gave that little scalding, we could not know the reason for, till we grow far up.

I must do my Goodnight, in *crayon* – I *meant* to – in Red. Love for Mary.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 203–204, in part; *LL* 231–232, in part; *L* (1931) 194, in part.

Bowles soon recovered enough to visit Amherst on 5 April, before sailing for Europe in the *China* on the ninth.

260

To T. W. Higginson *15 April 1862*

Mr Higginson,

Are you too deeply occupied to say if my Verse is alive?

The Mind is so near itself – it cannot see, distinctly – and I have none to ask –

Should you think it breathed – and had you the leisure to tell me, I should feel quick gratitude –

If I make the mistake – that you dared to tell me – would give me sincerer honor – toward you –

I enclose my name – asking you, if you please – Sir – to tell me what is true?

That you will not betray me – it is needless to ask – since Honor is it's own pawn –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 50). Ink. Envelope addressed: T. W. Higginson./Worcester./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Apr 15 1862.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (October 1891) 444; *L* (1894) 301; *LL* 238; *L* (1931) 272.

In place of a signature, ED enclosed a card (in its own envelope) on which she wrote her name. This first letter to Higginson, which begins a correspondence that lasted until the month of her death, she wrote because she had just read his "Letter to a Young Contributor," the lead article in the *Atlantic Monthly* for April, offering practical advice to beginning writers. She also enclosed four poems: "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers," "The nearest Dream recedes unrealized," "We play at Paste," and "I'll tell you how the Sun rose." When Higginson first published the letter (in the first publication named above), he introduced it by saying: "On April 16, 1862, I took from the post office in Worcester, Mass., where I was then living, the following letter."

To T. W. Higginson *25 April 1862*

Mr Higginson,

Your kindness claimed earlier gratitude – but I was ill – and write today, from my pillow.

Thank you for the surgery – it was not so painful as I supposed. I bring you others – as you ask – though they might not differ –

While my thought is undressed – I can make the distinction, but when I put them in the Gown – they look alike, and numb.

You asked how old I was? I made no verse – but one or two – until this winter – Sir –

I had a terror – since September – I could tell to none – and so I sing, as the Boy does by the Burying Ground – because I am afraid – You inquire my Books – For Poets – I have Keats – and Mr and Mrs Browning. For Prose – Mr Ruskin – Sir Thomas Browne – and the Revelations. I went to school – but in your manner of the phrase – had no education. When a little Girl, I had a friend, who taught me Immortality – but venturing too near, himself – he never returned – Soon after, my Tutor, died – and for several years, my Lexicon – was my only companion – Then I found one more – but he was not contented I be his scholar – so he left the Land.

You ask of my Companions Hills – Sir – and the Sundown – and a Dog – large as myself, that my Father bought me – They are better than Beings – because they know – but do not tell – and the noise in the Pool, at Noon – excels my Piano. I have a Brother and Sister – My Mother does not care for thought – and Father, too busy with his Briefs – to notice what we do – He buys me many Books – but begs me not to read them – because he fears they joggle the Mind. They are religious – except me – and address an Eclipse, every morning – whom they call their "Father." But I fear my story fatigues you – I would like to learn – Could you tell me how to grow – or is it unconveyed – like Melody – or Witchcraft?

You speak of Mr Whitman – I never read his Book – but was told that he was disgraceful –

I read Miss Prescott's "Circumstance," but it followed me, in the Dark – so I avoided her –

Two Editors of Journals came to my Father's House, this winter –

and asked me for my Mind – and when I asked them "Why," they said I was penurious – and they, would use it for the World –

I could not weigh myself – Myself –

My size felt small – to me – I read your Chapters in the Atlantic – and experienced honor for you – I was sure you would not reject a confiding question –

Is this – Sir – what you asked me to tell you?

Your friend,
E – Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 51). Ink. Envelope addressed: T. W. Higginson./Worcester./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Apr 26 1862.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (Oct. 1891) 445–446; *L* (1894) 301–303; *LL* 238–240; *L* (1931) 272–274.

Higginson says in his *Atlantic Monthly* article introducing the letter (cited above) that the enclosed poems were two: "Your riches taught me poverty," and "A bird came down the walk." But the evidence after study of the folds in the letters and poems suggest that he was in error. The enclosures seem to have been: "There came a Day at Summer's full," "Of all the Sounds despatched abroad," and "South Winds jostle them." Harriet Prescott Spofford's "Circumstance" was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May 1860. Higginson's "Letter to a Young Contributor" quotes Ruskin and cites Sir Thomas Browne for vigor of style. The article's comment on "what a delicious prolonged perplexity it is to cut and contrive a decent *clothing of words* . . ." may explain ED's phrase "While my thought is undressed." The friend who taught her "Immortality" has generally been thought to be Benjamin Franklin Newton. The two editors who recently had asked her for her mind may have been Bowles and Holland.

Though ED frequently refers to the Brownings, she never again mentions Ruskin, and Keats but twice (see letters no. 1018 and 1034).

262

To Mrs. Samuel Bowles *spring 1862*

Dear Mary –

When the Best is gone – I know that other things are not of consequence – The Heart wants what it wants – or else it does not care –

You wonder why I write – so – Because I cannot help – I like to

have you know some care – so when your life gets faint for it's other life – you can lean on us – We wont break, Mary. We look very small – but the Reed can carry weight.

Not to see what we love, is very terrible – and talking – does'nt ease it – and nothing does – but just itself.

The Eyes and Hair, we chose – are all there are – to us – Is'nt it so – Mary?

I often wonder how the love of Christ, is done – when that – below – holds – so –

I hope the little "Robert" coos away the pain – Perhaps your flowers, help – some –

Vinnie and Sue, are making Hot beds – but then, the Robins plague them so – they dont accomplish much –

The Frogs sing sweet – today – They have such pretty – lazy – times – how nice, to be a Frog! Sue – draws her little Boy – pleasant days – in a Cab – and Carlo – walks behind, accompanied by a Cat – from each establishment –

It looks funny to see so small a man, going out of Austin's House – Mother sends her love to you – She has a sprained foot – and can go, but little, in the House, and not abroad – at all. Dont dishearten – Mary – We'll keep thinking – of you – Kisses for all.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 204–205, in part; *LL* 232–233, in part; *L* (1931) 195, in part.

Samuel Bowles was abroad. ED continued to maintain the fiction that the infant Charles will be (or has been) named Robert. Ned Dickinson, the "small man," was less than a year old. It was not long before this letter was written that ED probably wrote the poem beginning "I'm Nobody," containing the lines "How dreary – to be – Somebody!/How public – like a Frog."

263

To Louise Norcross *early May 1862*

When you can leave your little children, Loo, you must tell us all you know about dear Myra's going, so sudden, and shocking to us all, we are only bewildered and cannot believe the telegrams. I want

so much to see you, and ask you what it means, and why this young life's sacrifice should come so soon, and not far off. I wake in the morning saying "Myra, no more Myra in this world," and the thought of that young face in the dark, makes the whole so sorrowful, I cover my face with the blanket, so the robins' singing cannot get through – I had rather not hear it. Was Myra willing to leave us all? I want so much to know if it was very hard, husband and babies and big life and sweet home by the sea. I should think she would rather have stayed. . . . She came to see us first in May. I remember her frock, and how prettily she fixed her hair, and she and Vinnie took long walks, and got home to tea at sundown; and now remembering is all there is, and no more Myra. I wish 'twas plainer, Loo, the anguish in this world. I wish one could be sure the suffering had a loving side. The thought to look down some day, and see the crooked steps we came, from a safer place, must be a precious thing. . . .

Loo, you are a dear child to go to Uncle Joel, and all will thank you, who love him. We will remember you every day, and the little children, and make a picture to ourself, of the small mamma. . . . Father and Vinnie would have gone immediately to Lynn, but got the telegram too late. Tell Uncle they wanted to. But what can Emily say? Their Father in Heaven remember them and her.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 244–245; *L* (1931) 226.

Lamira, wife of Joel W. Norcross, died on 3 May 1862, at Lynn. Loo is taking care of her uncle's children.

264

To Louise and Frances Norcross — *late May 1862*

My little girls have alarmed me so that notwithstanding the comfort of Austin's assurance that "they will come," I am still hopeless and scared, and regard Commencement as some vast anthropic bear, ordained to eat me up. What made 'em scare 'em so? Didn't they know Cousin Aspen couldn't stand alone? I remember a tree in McLean Street, when you and we were a little girl, whose leaves went topsy-turvy as often as a wind, and showed an ashen side – that's fright,

that's Emily. Loo and Fanny were that wind, and the poor leaf, who? Won't they stop a'blowing? . . . Commencement would be a dreary spot without my double flower, that sows itself and just comes up when Emily seeks it most. Austin gives excellent account, I trust not overdrawn. "Health and aspect admirable, and lodgings very fine." Says the rooms were marble, even to the flies. Do they dwell in Carrara? Did they find the garden in the gown? Should have sent a farm, but feared for our button-hole. Hope to hear favorable news on receipt of this. Please give date of coming, so we might prepare our heart.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 245–246; *L* (1931) 227.

Louise arrived in Amherst on 10 June. Commencement was held on 10 July.

265

To T. W. Higginson *7 June 1862*

Dear friend.

Your letter gave no Drunkenness, because I tasted Rum before – Domingo comes but once – yet I have had few pleasures so deep as your opinion, and if I tried to thank you, my tears would block my tongue –

My dying Tutor told me that he would like to live till I had been a poet, but Death was much of Mob as I could master – then – And when far afterward – a sudden light on Orchards, or a new fashion in the wind troubled my attention – I felt a palsy, here – the Verses just relieve –

Your second letter surprised me, and for a moment, swung – I had not supposed it. Your first – gave no dishonor, because the True – are not ashamed – I thanked you for your justice – but could not drop the Bells whose jingling cooled my Tramp – Perhaps the Balm, seemed better, because you bled me, first.

I smile when you suggest that I delay "to publish" – that being foreign to my thought, as Firmament to Fin –

If fame belonged to me, I could not escape her – if she did not, the longest day would pass me on the chase – and the approbation of my Dog, would forsake me – then – My Barefoot-Rank is better –

You think my gait "spasmodic" – I am in danger – Sir –
You think me "uncontrolled" – I have no Tribunal.

Would you have time to be the "friend" you should think I need? I have a little shape – it would not crowd your Desk – nor make much Racket as the Mouse, that dents your Galleries –

If I might bring you what I do – not so frequent to trouble you – and ask you if I told it clear – 'twould be control, to me –

The Sailor cannot see the North – but knows the Needle can –

The "hand you stretch me in the Dark," I put mine in, and turn away – I have no Saxon, now –

As if I asked a common Alms,
And in my wondering hand
A Stranger pressed a Kingdom,
And I, bewildered, stand –
As if I asked the Orient
Had it for me a Morn –
And it should lift it's purple Dikes,
And shatter me with Dawn!

But, will you be my Preceptor, Mr Higginson?

Your friend
E Dickinson –

Manuscript: BPL (Higg 52). Ink. Envelope addressed: T. W. Higginson./Worcester./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Ms Jun 7 1862.

Publication: *AM* LXVIII (Oct. 1891) 447; *L* (1894) 303–304; *LL* 240–241; *L* (1931) 274–275.

The phrase "I have no Saxon" means "Language fails me": see *Poems* (1955) 197, where in poem no. 276 she offers "English language" as her alternative for "Saxon." She enclosed no poems in this letter.

266

To Samuel Bowles *early summer 1862*

Dear friend –

You go away – and where you go, we cannot come – but then the Months have names – and each one comes but once a year – and though it seems they never could, they sometimes do – go by.

We hope you are more well, than when you lived in America – and that those Foreign people are kind, and true, to you. We hope you recollect each life you left behind, even our's, the least –

We wish we knew how Amherst looked, in your memory. Smaller than it did, maybe – and yet things swell, by leaving – if big in themselves – We hope you will not alter, but be the same we grieved for, when the "China" sailed. If you should like to hear the news, we did not die – here – We did not change. We have the Guests we did, except yourself – and the Roses hang on the same stems – as before you went. Vinnie trains the Honeysuckle – and the Robins steal the string for Nests – quite, quite as they used to – I have the errand from my heart – I might forget to tell it. Would you please to come Home? The long life's years are scant, and fly away, the Bible says, like a told story – and sparing is a solemn thing, somehow, it seems to me – and I grope fast, with my fingers, for all out of my sight I own – to get it nearer –

I had one letter from Mary – I think she tries to be patient – but you would'nt want her to succeed, would you, Mr Bowles?

It's fragrant news, to know they pine, when we are out of sight. It is most Commencement. The little Cousin from Boston, has come, and the Hearts in Pelham, have an added thrill. We shall miss you, most, dear friend, who annually smiled with us, at the Gravities. I question, if even Dr Vaill, have his wonted applause.

Should anybody where you go, talk of Mrs. Browning, you must hear for us – and if you touch her Grave, put one hand on the Head, for me – her unmentioned Mourner –

Father and Mother, and Vinnie, and Carlo, send their love to you, and warm wish for your health – and I am taking lessons in prayer, so to coax God to keep you safe – Good night – dear friend. You sleep so far, how can I know you hear?

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Envelope addressed (in pencil): Mr Bowles.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 205–207; *LL* 233–234; *L* (1931) 195–196.

This letter must have been sent to someone, perhaps Mary Bowles, to be forwarded to Samuel Bowles, still abroad. It was written after the arrival of Louise Norcross in June, and before commencement, in July. Bowles customarily attended the "Gravities," and himself wrote the account annually for the *Republican*.

267

To Louise and Frances Norcross *mid-July 1862*

. . . Just a word for my children, before the mails shut. Loo left a tumbler of sweet-peas on the green room bureau. I am going to leave them there till they make pods and sow themselves in the upper drawer, and then I guess they'll blossom about Thanksgiving time. There was a thunder-shower here Saturday at car-time, and Emily was glad her little ones had gone before the hail and rain, lest it frighten them. . . . We wish the visit had just begun instead of ending now; next time we'll leave "the mountains" out, and tell good Dr. Gregg to recommend the orchards. I defrauded Loo of 1 spool of thread; we will "settle," however – and Fanny's ruff is set high in my book of remembrance. They must be good children and recollect, as they agreed, and grow so strong in health that Emily won't know them when they show again. . . . Such a purple morning – even to the morning-glory that climbs the cherry-tree. The cats desire love to Fanny.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 246; *L* (1931) 227–228.

Both the Norcross girls were present for commencement, and left Amherst shortly thereafter.

268

To T. W. Higginson *July 1862*

Could you believe me – without? I had no portrait, now, but am small, like the Wren, and my Hair is bold, like the Chestnut Bur – and my eyes, like the Sherry in the Glass, that the Guest leaves – Would this do just as well?

It often alarms Father – He says Death might occur, and he has Molds of all the rest – but has no Mold of me, but I noticed the Quick wore off those things, in a few days, and forestall the dishonor – You will think no caprice of me –

You said "Dark." I know the Butterfly – and the Lizard – and the Orchis –

Are not those *your* Countrymen?

I am happy to be your scholar, and will deserve the kindness, I cannot repay.

If you truly consent, I recite, now –

Will you tell me my fault, frankly as to yourself, for I had rather wince, than die. Men do not call the surgeon, to commend – the Bone, but to set it, Sir, and fracture within, is more critical. And for this, Preceptor, I shall bring you – Obedience – the Blossom from my Garden, and every gratitude I know. Perhaps you smile at me. I could not stop for that – My Business is Circumference – An ignorance, not of Customs, but if caught with the Dawn – or the Sunset see me – Myself the only Kangaroo among the Beauty, Sir, if you please, it afflicts me, and I thought that instruction would take it away.

Because you have much business, beside the growth of me – you will appoint, yourself, how often I shall come – without your inconvenience. And if at any time – you regret you received me, or I prove a different fabric to that you supposed – you must banish me –

When I state myself, as the Representative of the Verse – it does not mean – me – but a supposed person. You are true, about the "perfection."

Today, makes Yesterday mean.

You spoke of Pippa Passes – I never heard anybody speak of Pippa Passes – before.

You see my posture is benighted.

To thank you, baffles me. Are you perfectly powerful? Had I a pleasure you had not, I could delight to bring it.

Your Scholar

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 54), dated by Higginson: July 1862. Ink. Envelope addressed: T. W. Higginson/Princeton/Massachusetts. Postmarked: Jul [?] 1862.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (Oct. 1891) 447–448; *L* (1894), 305–306; *LL* 241–243; *L* (1931) 276–277.

"Pippa Passes," the first of the series in Browning's "Bells and Pomegranates," had been published in 1841. The letter enclosed four poems: "Of Tribulation these are they," "Your Riches taught me poverty," "Some keep the Sabbath going to Church," and "Success is counted sweetest."

To Dr. and Mrs. J. G. Holland *summer 1862?*

Dear Friends,

I write to you. I receive no letter.

I say "they dignify my trust." I do not disbelieve. I go again. *Cardinals* wouldn't do it. Cockneys wouldn't do it, but I can't *stop* to strut, in a world where bells toll. I hear through visitor in town, that "Mrs. Holland is not strong." The little peacock in me, tells me not to inquire again. Then I remember my tiny friend – how brief she is – how dear she is, and the peacock quite dies away. Now, you need not speak, for perhaps you are weary, and "Herod" requires all your thought, but if you are *well* – let Annie draw me a little picture of an erect flower; if you are *ill*, she can hang the flower a little on one side!

Then, I shall understand, and you need not stop to write me a letter. Perhaps you laugh at me! Perhaps the whole United States are laughing at me too! *I* can't stop for that! *My* business is to love. I found a bird, this morning, down – down – on a little bush at the foot of the garden, and wherefore sing, I said, since nobody *hears*?

One sob in the throat, one flutter of bosom – "*My* business is to *sing*" – and away she rose! How do I know but cherubim, once, themselves, as patient, listened, and applauded her unnoticed hymn?

Emily.

Manuscript: missing.

Publication: *L* (1894) 175–176; *L* (1931) 169; *LH* 55–56: dated (presumably by ED): Friday.

This letter is dated by conjecture only. Mrs. Ward, though placing it with a question mark in 1859 (in *LH*), now feels that 1862 is perhaps more likely. The evidence for the later date is in the phrase "in a world where bells toll" – suggesting the war period, and especially in the sentences: "Perhaps you laugh at me! . . . *I* can't stop for that! *My* business is to love . . . *My* business is to *sing*." The juxtaposition of the sentences closely follows that in the preceding letter to Higginson: "Perhaps you smile at me. I could not stop for that – My Business is Circumference." It was in 1862 that ED indeed felt that her business was to sing.

Bulwer-Lytton's widely popular drama *Richelieu* (1839) might account for ED's opinion of cardinals, and Emerson's *English Traits* (1856) could be the source of her opinion of "cockney conceit." In context, "Herod"

seems to personify the persecution of illness. Annie was ten years old in the summer of 1862.

This letter asking to hear from the Hollands, if it belongs here, is the only surviving message to them between 1860 and 1865 (see nos. 227 and 311).

270

To Eudocia C. Flynt *about 20 July 1862*

Dear Mrs Flint

You and I, did'nt finish talking. Have you room for the sequel, in your Vase?

All the letters I could write,
Were not fair as this –
Syllables of Velvet –
Sentences of Plush –
Depths of Ruby, undrained –
Hid, Lip, for Thee,
Play it were a Humming Bird
And sipped just Me –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: YUL. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *Yale University Library Gazette* VI (1931) 43.

Eudocia Flynt's diary (see letter no. 226) records her visit to Amherst at commencement, 10 July, and her receipt of this letter on 21 July: "Had a letter from Emily Dickinson!!!!"

271

To T. W. Higginson *August 1862*

Dear friend –

Are these more orderly? I thank you for the Truth –

I had no Monarch in my life, and cannot rule myself, and when I try to organize – my little Force explodes – and leaves me bare and charred –

I think you called me "Wayward." Will you help me improve?

I suppose the pride that stops the Breath, in the Core of Woods, is not of Ourself –

You say I confess the little mistake, and omit the large – Because I can see Orthography – but the Ignorance out of sight – is my Preceptor's charge –

Of "shunning Men and Women" – they talk of Hallowed things, aloud – and embarrass my Dog – He and I dont object to them, if they'll exist their side. I think Carl[o] would please you – He is dumb, and brave – I think you would like the Chestnut Tree, I met in my walk. It hit my notice suddenly – and I thought the Skies were in Blossom –

Then there's a noiseless noise in the Orchard – that I let persons hear – You told me in one letter, you could not come to see me, "now," and I made no answer, not because I had none, but did not think myself the price that you should come so far –

I do not ask so large a pleasure, lest you might deny me –

You say "Beyond your knowledge." You would not jest with me, because I believe you – but Preceptor – you cannot mean it? All men say "What" to me, but I thought it a fashion –

When much in the Woods as a little Girl, I was told that the Snake would bite me, that I might pick a poisonous flower, or Goblins kidnap me, but I went along and met no one but Angels, who were far shyer of me, than I could be of them, so I hav'nt that confidence in fraud which many exercise.

I shall observe your precept – though I dont understand it, always.

I marked a line in One Verse – because I met it after I made it – and never consciously touch a paint, mixed by another person –

I do not let go it, because it is mine.

Have you the portrait of Mrs Browning? Persons sent me three – If you had none, will you have mine?

Your Scholar –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 55). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (October 1891) 448–449; *L* (1894) 307–309; *LL* 243–244; *L* (1931) 277–278.

With this letter ED enclosed two poems: "Before I got my Eye put out," and "I cannot dance upon my Toes."

To Samuel Bowles *about August 1862*

Dear Mr Bowles.

Vinnie is trading with a Tin peddler – buying Water pots for me to sprinkle Geraniums with – when you get Home, next Winter, and Vinnie and Sue, have gone to the War.

Summer a'nt so long as it was, when we stood looking at it, before you went away, and when I finish August, we'll hop the Autumn, very soon – and then 'twill be Yourself. I dont know how many will be glad to see you, because I never saw your whole friends, but I have heard, that in large Cities – noted persons chose you. Though how glad those I know – will be, is easier told.

I tell you, Mr Bowles, it is a Suffering, to have a sea – no care how Blue – between your Soul, and you. The Hills you used to love when you were in Northampton, miss their old lover, could they speak – and the puzzled look – deepens in Carlo's forehead, as Days go by, and you never come.

I've learned to read the Steamer place – in Newspapers – now. It's 'most like shaking hands, with you – or more like your ringing at the door, when Sue says you will call.

We reckon – your coming by the Fruit.

When the Grape gets by – and the Pippin, and the Chestnut – when the Days are a little short by the clock – and a little long by the want – when the sky has new Red Gowns – and a Purple Bonnet – then we say, you will come – I am glad that kind of time, goes by.

It is easier to look behind at a pain, than to see it coming. A Soldier called – a Morning ago, and asked for a Nosegay, to take to Battle. I suppose he thought we kept an Aquarium.

How sweet it must be to one to come Home – whose Home is in so many Houses – and every Heart a "Best Room." I mean you, Mr Bowles.

Sue gave me the paper, to write on – so when the writing tires you – play it is Her, and "Jackey" – and that will rest your eyes – for have not the Clòvers, *names*, to the Bees?

Emily.

Manuscript: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 207–208, in part; *LL* 234–235, in part; *L* (1931) 197–198, in part.

The stationery, on which ED comments, is especially lightweight, intended for overseas correspondence. Bowles remained in Europe until November. "Jackey" was the nickname for Ned, used by his parents when he was a baby. ED's identification with issues of the day was slight throughout her life. Her remark about the soldier here is one of her relatively few comments on any aspect of the Civil War.

273

To Louise and Frances Norcross *1862?*

. . . Uncle told us you were too busy. Fold your little hands – the heart is the only workman we cannot excuse.

. . . Gratitude is not the mention of a tenderness, but its mute appreciation, deeper than we reach – all our LORD demands, who sizes better knows than we. Willing unto death, if only we perceive He die.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 241; *L* (1931) 224.

The date given by Mrs. Todd, 29 December 1861, was probably supplied by Frances Norcross. "Uncle" refers to the girls' father, Loring Norcross, who died 17 January 1863. The extracts are from a letter (or letters) written before that date.

274

To T. W. Higginson *6 October 1862*

Did I displease you, Mr Higginson?
But wont you tell me how?

Your friend,
E. Dickinson –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 53). Ink. Envelope addressed: T. W. Higginson./Worcester./Mass. Postmarked: Amherst Mass Oct 6 1862.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (Oct. 1891) 450; *L* (1931) 290.

In *AM* Higginson introduces the letter with the comment: "Sometimes there would be a long pause, on my part, after which would come a plaintive letter, always terse, like this."

275

To Samuel Bowles *mid-November 1862*

Dear friend.

Had We the Art like You – to endow so many, by just recovering our Health, 'twould give us tender pride – nor could we keep the news – but carry it to you – who seem to us to own it most.

So few that live – have life – it seems of quick importance – not one of those – escape by Death. And since you gave us Fear – Congratulate us – for Ourselves – you give us safer – Peace.

How extraordinary that Life's large Population contain so few of power to us – and those – a vivid species – who leave no mode – like Tyrian Dye.

Remembering these Minorities – permit our gratitude for you – We ask that you be cautious – for many sakes – excelling Our's. To recapitulate the Stars – were useless as supreme. Yourself is Your's – dear friend – but ceded – is it not – to here and there a minor Life? Do not defraud These – for Gold – may be bought – and Purple – may be bought – but the sale of the Spirit – never did occur.

Do not yet work. No Public so exorbitant of Any – as it's Friend – and we can wait your Health.

Besides – there is an idleness – more Tonic than Toil.

> The loss by Sickness – was it loss –
> Or that Etherial Gain –
> You earned by measuring the Grave –
> Then – measuring the Sun.

Be sure, dear friend, for Want – you have Estates of Lives.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 209–210; *LL* 236–237; *L* (1931) 199.
The letter seems to be a greeting written to Bowles after his return from

Europe on 17 November 1862. The quatrain at the end of the letter is the concluding stanza of the poem beginning "My first well Day – since many ill."

276

To Samuel Bowles *late November 1862*

Dear friend

I cannot see you. You will not less believe me. That you return to us alive, is better than a Summer. And more to hear your voice below, than News of any Bird.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 207; *LL* 234; *L* (1931) 197.
Bowles paid a call after his return from Europe, but ED, finding herself unable to see him, sent this brief note downstairs.

277

To Samuel Bowles *late November 1862*

Dear friend.

I did not need the little Bat – to enforce your memory – for that can stand alone, like the best Brocade – but it was much – that far and ill, you recollected me – Forgive me if I prize the Grace – superior to the Sign. Because I did not see you, Vinnie and Austin, upbraided me – They did not know I gave my part that they might have the more – but then the Prophet had no fame in his immediate Town – My Heart led all the rest – I think that what we *know* – we can endure that others doubt, until their faith be riper. And so, dear friend, who knew me, I make no argument – to you –

Did I not want to see you? Do not the Phebes want to come? Oh They of little faith! I said I was glad that you were alive – Might it bear repeating? Some phrases are too fine to fade – and Light but just confirms them – Few absences could seem so wide as your's has done,

to us – If 'twas a larger face – or we a smaller Canvas – we need not know – now you have come –

We hope often to see you – Our poverty – entitle us – and friends are nations in themselves – to supersede the Earth –

'Twould please us, were you well – and could your health be had by sacrifice of ours – 'twould be contention for the place – We used to tell each other, when you were from America – how failure in a Battle – were easier – and you here – I will not tell you further –

Perhaps you tire – now – A small weight – is obnoxious – upon a weary Rope – but had you Exile – or Eclipse – or so huge a Danger, as would dissolve all other friends – 'twould please me to remain –

Let others – show this Surry's Grace –
Myself – assist his Cross.

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: Hooker. Ink. Unpublished.

This letter closely followed the note which precedes it. The allusion to brocade that stands alone was probably suggested by a sentence in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (chapter 12), recently published (1860), which ED was perhaps now reading: "Mrs. Glegg . . . had inherited from her grandmother . . . a brocaded gown that would stand up empty, like a suit of armour. . ." (see also letter no. 368). Henry Howard, earl of Surrey (1517–1547), the first English writer of blank verse, was accused of high treason, tried before a packed jury, and beheaded.

278

To Louise and Frances Norcross *late January 1863*

What shall I tell these darlings except that my father and mother are half their father and mother, and my home half theirs, whenever, and for as long as, they will. And sometimes a dearer thought than that creeps into my mind, but it is not for to-night. Wasn't dear papa so tired always after mamma went, and wasn't it almost sweet to think of the two together these new winter nights? The grief is our side, darlings, and the glad is theirs. Vinnie and I sit down to-night, while mother tells what makes us cry, though we know it is well and easy

with uncle and papa, and only our part hurts. Mother tells how gently he looked on all who looked at him – how he held his bouquet sweet, as he were a guest in a friend's parlor and must still do honor. The meek, mild gentleman who thought no harm, but peace toward all.

Vinnie intended to go, but the day was cold, and she wanted to keep Uncle Loring as she talked with him, always, instead of this new way. She thought too, for the crowd, she could not see you, children, and she would be another one to give others care. Mother said Mr. V[aill], yes, dears, even Mr. V[aill], at whom we sometimes smile, talked about "Lorin' and Laviny" and his friendship towards them, to your father's guests. We won't smile at him any more now, will we? Perhaps he'll live to tell some gentleness of us, who made merry of him.

But never mind that now. When you have strength, tell us how it is, and what we may do for you, of comfort, or of service. Be sure you crowd all others out, precious little cousins. Good-night. Let Emily sing for you because she cannot pray:

It is not dying hurts us so, –
'Tis living hurts us more;
But dying is a different way,
A kind, behind the door, –
The southern custom of the bird
That soon as frosts are due
Adopts a better latitude.
We are the birds that stay,
The shiverers round farmers' doors,
For whose reluctant crumb
We stipulate, till pitying snows
Persuade our feathers home.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 250–251; *LL* 252–253; *L* (1931) 228–229.

The girls were orphaned by the death of their father, Loring Norcross, on 17 January 1863. The service was conducted by the Reverend Joseph Vaill of Palmer.

To Louise and Frances Norcross *early February 1863*

So many ask for the children that I must make a separate letter to tell them what they say, and leave my kisses till next time.

Eliza wrote last week, faint note in pencil – dressed in blankets, and propped up, having been so sick – and yet too weak to talk much, even with her slate. She said this of you, I give it in her own words, "Make them know I love them," and added, should have written immediately herself, except for weakness.

Mr. Dwight asks for you in the phrase "Of your sweet cousins." He does not yet know papa is asleep – only very weary.

The milliner at the head of the street wipes her eye for Fanny and Loo, and a tear rumples her ribbons. Mr. and Mrs. Sweetser care – Mrs. Sweetser most tenderly.

. . . Even Dick's wife, simple dame, with a kitchen full, and the grave besides, of little ragged ones, wants to know "more about" you, and follows mother to the door, who has called with bundle.

Dick says, in his wise way, he "shall always be interested in them young ladies." One little young lady of his own, you know, is in Paradise. That makes him tenderer-minded.

Be sure you don't doubt about the sparrow.

Poor H[arriet] and Z[ebina Montague], in their genteel antique way express their sympathy, mixing admiring anecdotes of your father and mother's youth, when they, God help them, were not so sere. Besides these others, children, shall we tell them who else cherish, every day the same, the bright day and the black one too – Could it be Emily?

Would it interest the children to know that crocuses come up, in the garden off the dining-room? and a fuchsia, that pussy partook, mistaking it for strawberries. And that we have primroses – like the little pattern sent in last winter's note – and heliotropes by the aprons full, the mountain colored one – and a jessamine bud, you know the little odor like Lubin – and gilliflowers, magenta, and few mignonette and sweet alyssum bountiful, and carnation buds?

Will it please them to know that the ice-house is filled, to make their tumblers cool next Summer – and once in a while a cream?

And that father has built a new road round the pile of trees be-

tween our house and Mr. S[weetser]'s, where they can take the soldier's shirt to make, or a sweet poem, and no man find them, but the fly and he such a little man.

Love dears, from us all, and wont you tell us how you are? We seem to hear so little.

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 252–253; *LL* 263, in part; *L* (1931) 229–231.

Eliza Coleman Dudley was recovering from an illness. ED seems still to be in communication with the Reverend Edward S. Dwight. On Dick Matthews, see Appendix 2.

Frances Norcross's transcript of the last five paragraphs is in the Bingham collection (AC), and is here reproduced. Brackets supply names of persons who are indicated in the transcript by initials only.

280

To T. W. Higginson *February 1863*

Dear friend

I did not deem that Planetary forces annulled – but suffered an Exchange of Territory, or World –

I should have liked to see you, before you became improbable. War feels to me an oblique place – Should there be other Summers, would you perhaps come?

I found you were gone, by accident, as I find Systems are, or Seasons of the year, and obtain no cause – but suppose it a treason of Progress – that dissolves as it goes. Carlo – still remained – and I told him –

Best Gains – must have the Losses' Test –
To constitute them – Gains –

My Shaggy Ally assented –

Perhaps Death – gave me awe for friends – striking sharp and early, for I held them since – in a brittle love – of more alarm, than peace. I trust you may pass the limit of War, and though not reared to prayer – when service is had in Church, for Our Arms, I include yourself – I, too, have an "Island" – whose "Rose and Magnolia" are in the Egg, and

it's "Black Berry" but a spicy prospective, yet as you say, "fascination" is absolute of Clime. I was thinking, today – as I noticed, that the "Supernatural," was only the Natural, disclosed –

Not "Revelation" – 'tis – that waits,
But our unfurnished eyes –

But I fear I detain you –

Should you, before this reaches you, experience immortality, who will inform me of the Exchange? Could you, with honor, avoid Death, I entreat you – Sir – It would bereave

Your Gnome –

I trust the "Procession of Flowers" was not a premonition –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 56). Ink. Dated: Amherst.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (October 1891) 449; *L* (1894) 309–310, in part; *LL* 248–249, in part; *L* (1931) 278–279, entire.

In the letter ED enclosed "The Soul unto itself." Higginson had gone to South Carolina, in command of a Negro regiment, in November 1862. The *Springfield Republican* carried long items about Higginson and his troops in the issues of 1 January and 6 February 1863. Higginson's "Procession of Flowers" appeared in the December 1862, issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*. He could never explain the reason for the signature. One conjectures that perhaps he had earlier commented on the gnomic quality of her verses.

281

To Louise and Frances Norcross *late May 1863*

I said I should come "in a day." Emily never fails except for a cause; that you know, dear Loo.

The nights turned hot, when Vinnie had gone, and I must keep no window raised for fear of prowling "booger," and I must shut my door for fear front door slide open on me at the "dead of night," and I must keep "gas" burning to light the danger up, so I could distinguish it – these gave me a snarl in the brain which don't unravel yet, and that old nail in my breast pricked me; these, dear, were my cause. Truth is so best of all I wanted you to know. Vinnie will tell of her visit. . . .

About Commencement, children, I can have no doubt, if you

should fail me then, my little life would fail of itself. Could you only lie in your little bed and smile at me, that would be support. Tell the doctor I am inexorable, besides I shall heal you quicker than he. You need the balsam word. And who is to cut the cake, ask Fanny, and chirp to those trustees? Tell me, dears, by the coming mail, that you will not fail me. . . .

Jennie Hitchcock's mother was buried yesterday, so there is one orphan more, and her father is very sick besides. My father and mother went to the service, and mother said while the minister prayed, a hen with her chickens came up, and tried to fly into the window. I suppose the dead lady used to feed them, and they wanted to bid her good-by.

Life is death we're lengthy at, death the hinge to life.

Love from all,

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 246–247; *LL* 249–250; *L* (1931) 231.
Professor Edward Hitchcock's wife died on 26 May 1863.

282

To T. W. Higginson *about 1863*

Dear friend –

You were so generous to me, that if possible I offended you, I could not too deeply apologize.

To doubt my High Behavior, is a new pain – I could be honorable no more – till I asked you about it. I know not what to deem myself – Yesterday "Your Scholar" – but might I be the one you tonight, forgave, 'tis a Better Honor – Mine is but just the Thief's Request –

Please, Sir, Hear

"Barabbas" –

The possibility to pass
Without a Moment's Bell –
Into Conjecture's presence –
Is like a face of steel

That suddenly looks into our's
With a Metallic Grin –
The Cordiality of Death
Who Drills his welcome – in –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 58). Ink. Dated: Amherst.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 311; *LL* 266; *L* (1931) 281.
Higginson dated the letter "1865?," but the handwriting is clearly earlier. The poem with which the letter concludes is the second stanza of "That after Horror – that 'twas *us*." For "the Thief's Request," see letter no. 195.

283

To Samuel Bowles *about 1863*

The Zeroes – taught us – Phosphorus –
We learned to like the Fire
By playing Glaciers – when a Boy –
And Tinder – guessed – by power
Of Opposite – to balance Odd –
If White – a Red – must be!
Paralysis – our Primer – dumb –
Unto Vitality!

I could'nt let Austin's note go – without a word –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 200; *LL* 227; *L* (1931) 191; *Poems* (1955) 532.
The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

284

To Samuel Bowles *autumn 1863*

Mother never asked a favor of Mr Bowles before – that He accept from Her the little Barrel of Apples –

"Sweet Apples" – She exhorts me – with an occasional Baldwin – for Mary, and the squirrels

Emily

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text reproduces the facsimile published in *Letters* (1894). Dated: Saturday.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 217, with facsimile; *LL* 255; *L* (1931) 204. The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

285

To Louise and Frances Norcross — *7 October 1863*

Dear Children,

Nothing has happened but loneliness, perhaps too daily to relate. Carlo is consistent, has asked for nothing to eat or drink, since you went away. Mother thinks him a model dog, and conjectures what he might have been, had not Vinnie "demoralized" him. Margaret objects to furnace heat on account of bone decrepitudes, so I dwell in my bonnet and suffer comfortably. . . .

Miss Kingman called last evening to inspect your garden; I gave her a lanthorn, and she went out, and thanks you very much. No one has called so far, but one old lady to look at a house. I directed her to the cemetery to spare expense of moving.

I got down before father this morning, and spent a few moments profitably with the South Sea rose. Father detecting me, advised wiser employment, and read at devotions the chapter of the gentleman with one talent. I think he thought my conscience would adjust the gender.

Margaret washed to-day, and accused Vinnie of calicoes. I put her shoe and bonnet in to have them nice when she got home. I found a milliner's case in Miss N[orcross]'s wardrobe, and have opened business. I have removed a geranium leaf, and supplied a lily in Vinnie's parlor vase. The sweet-peas are unchanged. Cattle-show is to-morrow. The coops and committees are passing now. . . . They are picking the Baldwin apples. Be good children, and mind the vicar. Tell me precisely how Wakefield looks, since I go not myself.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 248–249; *LL* 250–251; *L* (1931) 232, dated (presumably by ED): Wednesday.

The Cattle Show in 1863 took place on 8–9 October, but the sisters did not stay for it. ED may mean by "the South Sea rose" that she is reading Melville's *Typee*.

286

To Louise and Frances Norcross — *mid-October 1863?*

. . . I should be wild with joy to see my little lovers. The writing them is not so sweet as their two faces that seem so small way off, and yet have been two weeks from me – two wishful, wandering weeks. Now, I begin to doubt if they ever came.

I bid the stiff "good-night" and the square "good-morning" to the lingering guest, I finish mama's sacque, all but the overcasting – that fatal sacque, you recollect. I pick up tufts of mignonette, and sweet alyssum for winter, dim as winter seems these red and gold, and ribbon days.

I am sure I feel as Noah did, docile, but somewhat sceptic, under the satinet.

No frost at our house yet. Thermometer frost, I mean. Mother had a new tooth Saturday. You know Dr. S[tratton] had promised her one for a long time. "Teething" didn't agree with her, and she kept her bed, Sunday, with a face that would take a premium at any cattle-show in the land. Came to town next morning with slightly reduced features, but no eye on the left side. Doubtless we are "fearfully and wonderfully made," and occasionally grotesquely.

L[ibbie] goes to Sunderland, Wednesday, for a minute or two; leaves here at 6½ – what a fitting hour – and will breakfast the night before; such a smart atmosphere! The trees stand right up straight when they hear her boots, and will bear crockery wares instead of fruit, I fear. She hasn't starched the geraniums yet, but will have ample time, unless she leaves before April. Emily is very mean, and her children in dark mustn't remember what she says about damsel.

Grateful for little notes, and shall ask for longer when my birds locate. Would it were here. Three sisters are prettier than one. . . Tabby is a continual shrine, and her jaunty ribbons put me in mind

of fingers far out at sea. Fanny's admonition made me laugh and cry too. In the hugest haste, and the engine waiting.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed. The text derives from *Letters* (1931), and is checked against the surviving part of the transcript (AC), which ends at "and will bear" in the fifth paragraph, made by Frances Norcross. Mrs. Todd dated it: Autumn, 1863.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 249–250; *LL* 251–252; *L* (1931) 232–233.

Two weeks have passed since the visit of the Norcross sisters, who are looking for a place to board. They had been orphaned by the death of their father in January, and did not have the means to keep up their former home. The description of the person identified as "L" applies most aptly to Edward Dickinson's youngest sister Elizabeth (Libbie), who remained throughout her life a somewhat redoubtable figure, described by ED in letter no. 473 as "the only male relative on the female side." She was still unmarried when this letter was written. (See letter no. 331.)

287

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1864*

I could not drink it, Sue,
Till you had tasted first –
Though cooler than the Water – was
The Thoughtfulness of Thirst –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 139). Pencil. Addressed on the fold: Sue.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 270; *Poems* (1955) 619.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. The note may have accompanied a small gift in acknowledgment of some attention from Sue before ED left home for her eye treatment in April. The nature of the eye affliction is not known. She made a trip to Boston on 4 February 1864 to consult Henry W. Williams, M.D., at 15 Arlington Street. He must have prescribed a course of treatments requiring his supervision, for late in April she went back to stay, remaining until 21 November. During this sojourn of nearly seven months she lived with her Norcross cousins in the boarding house of Mrs. Bangs, at 86 Austin Street, Cambridge (see letter no. 293).

288

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *Cambridge, about 1864*

Sweet Sue –

There is no first, or last, in Forever – It is Centre, there, all the time –

To believe – is enough, and the right of supposing –

Take back that "Bee" and "Buttercup" – I have no Field for them, though for the Woman whom I prefer, Here is Festival – Where my Hands are cut, Her fingers will be found inside –

Our beautiful Neighbor "moved" in May – It leaves an Unimportance.

Take the Key to the Lily, now, and I will lock the Rose –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 56). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 267.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. The friend who "moved" in May has not been identified. This note may have been written soon after ED arrived in Cambridge.

289

To Lavinia N. Dickinson *Cambridge, about May 1864*

Dear Vinnie,

I miss you most, and I want to go Home and take good care of you and make you happy every day.

The Doctor is not willing yet, and He is not willing I should write. He wrote to Father, himself, because He thought it not best for me.

You wont think it strange any more, will you?

Loo and Fanny take sweet care of me, and let me want for nothing, but I am not at Home, and the calls at the Doctor's are painful, and dear Vinnie, I have not looked at the Spring.

Wont you help me be patient?

I cannot write but this, and send a little flower, and hope you wont forget me, because I want to come so much I cannot make it show.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 153; *L* (1931) 150–151; *Home* 434.

The tone of the letter suggests that it was written shortly after ED arrived in Cambridge, but subsequent to the letter preceding.

Three other letters probably written about this time are nos. 1047, 1048, and 1049.

290

To T. W. Higginson *Cambridge, early June 1864*

Dear friend,

Are you in danger –

I did not know that you were hurt. Will you tell me more? Mr Hawthorne died.

I was ill since September, and since April, in Boston, for a Physician's care – He does not let me go, yet I work in my Prison, and make Guests for myself –

Carlo did not come, because that he would die, in Jail, and the Mountains, I could not hold now, so I brought but the Gods –

I wish to see you more than before I failed – Will you tell me your health?

I am surprised and anxious, since receiving your note –

The only News I know
Is Bulletins all day
From Immortality.

Can you render my Pencil?

The Physician has taken away my Pen.

I enclose the address from a letter, lest my figures fail – Knowledge of your recovery – would excel my own –

E – Dickinson

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 57). Pencil. Endorsed by TWH on last (blank) page: Miss Dickinson/86 Austin St/Cambridgeport/Mass.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (October 1891) 450; *L* (1894) 310–311; *LL* 262; *L* (1931) 280.

Higginson had been wounded in July 1863, and left the army in May 1864. From 10 June until 2 September the Higginsons were at Pigeon Cove; in November they settled at Newport, Rhode Island. Hawthorne died on 19 May 1864.

291

To Edward (Ned) Dickinson *Cambridge, 19 June 1864*

My little Uncle must remember me till I come Home a Hundred miles to see his Braided Gown –

Emily knows a Man who drives a Coach like a Thimble, and turns the Wheel all day with his Heel – His name is Bumblebee. Little Ned will see Him before

His Niece.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 16). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *LL* 57–58, in part.
This was written for Ned on his third birthday. The Amherst dressmaker's account (Jones Library) shows a dress made for him at this time.

292

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *Cambridge, June 1864*

Thank Susan for the effort, I shall not mind the Gloves – I knew it was the Bell, and not the Noon, that failed – For caution of my Hat, He says, the Doctor wipes my cheeks, so the Old Thimble will do –

I knew it was "November," but then there is a June when Corn is cut, whose option is within. That is why I prefer the Power – for Power is Glory, when it likes, and Dominion, too –

To include, is to be touchless, for Ourself cannot cease – Hawthorne's interruption does not seem as it did – Noon is Morning's Memoir, and I notice

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 161). Pencil. The ending is missing.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 231, in part.
For another reference to Hawthorne's death, see letter no. 290.

293

To Lavinia N. Dickinson *Cambridge, July 1864*

Dear Vinnie

Many write that they do not write because that they have too

much to say – I, that I have enough. Do you remember the Whippowil that sang one night on the Orchard fence, and then drove to the South, and we never heard of Him afterward?

He will go Home and I shall go Home, perhaps in the same Train.

It is a very sober thing not to have any Vinnie, and to keep my Summer in strange Towns, what I have not told – but I have found friends in the Wilderness.

You know "Elijah" did, and to see the "Ravens" mending my stockings, would break a Heart long hard – Fanny and Loo are solid Gold, Mrs Bangs and her Daughter very kind, and the Doctor enthusiastic about my getting well – I feel no gayness yet. I suppose I had been discouraged so long.

You remember the Prisoner of Chillon did not know Liberty when it came, and asked to go back to Jail.

Clara and Anna came to see me and brought beautiful flowers. Do you know what made them remember me? I was most surprised. Give them my love and gratitude. They told me about the Day at Pelham, You – dressed in Daisies, and Mr McDonald. I could'nt see you Vinnie. I am glad of all the Roses you find, while your Primrose is gone. How kind Mr Copeland grew.

Was Mr Dudley dear –

Emily wants to be well and with Vinnie – If any one alive wants to get well more, I would let Him first.

I am glad it is me, not Vinnie. Long time might seem further to Her. Give my love to Father and Mother, and Austin. Am so glad His Tobacco is well – I asked Father about it.

Tell Margaret I remember Her, and hope Richard is well.

Dear Vinnie, This is the longest letter I wrote since I was sick, but who needed it most, if not my little Sister? I hope she is not very tired, tonight. How I wish I could rest all those who are tired for me – Big Kiss for Fanny.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 151–152; *LL* 256–257; *L* (1931) 148–149; *Home* 434–435.

Fanny Norcross was in Amherst for commencement, 15 July. ED has received a visit from Clara and Anna Newman, who made their home at this time with Austin and Susan Dickinson. Vinnie frequently visited

Eliza and John Dudley at Middletown, Connecticut. Melvin B. Copeland, a Middletown businessman, was a friend of Vinnie's. On Mrs. Bangs, see the note in letter no. 287. For another allusion to Elijah and the ravens, see letter no. 326.

294

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *Cambridge, September 1864*

At Centre of the Sea –

I am glad Mrs – Gertrude lived – I believed she would – Those that are worthy of Life are of Miracle, for Life is Miracle, and Death, as harmless as a Bee, except to those who run –

It would be best to see you – it would be good to see the Grass, and hear the Wind blow the wide way in the Orchard – Are the Apples ripe – Have the Wild Geese crossed – Did you save the seed to the pond Lily?

Love for Mat, and John, and the Foreigner – And kiss little Ned in the seam in the neck, entirely for Me –

The Doctor is very kind –

I find no Enemy – Till the Four o'Clocks strike Five, Loo will last, she says. Do not cease, Sister. Should I turn in my long night I should murmur "Sue" –

Emily.

Manuscript: HCL (B 179). Pencil.

Publication: *FF* 231 and 266–267, excerpts only.

Susan's friend Gertrude Vanderbilt was accidentally wounded by a gun shot on 20 March 1864. A daughter, Susan Gilbert Smith, was born 8 September 1864 to Susan's sister, Martha Gilbert Smith. The phrase "At Centre of the Sea" forms the last line of the first stanza of the poem beginning "I many times thought Peace had come," written about 1863. This letter may or may not be complete.

295

To Lavinia N. Dickinson *Cambridge, about 1864*

. . . walk all the way, and sleep in the Bushes at night, but the Doctor says I must tell you that I "cannot yet walk alone" – Thank you

all for caring about me when I do no good. I will work with all my might, always, as soon as I get well –

Tell Mother to catch no more cold, and lose her cough, so I cannot find it, when I get Home – Tell Margaret I recollect her, and hope her finger is better – You must not miss Gray Pussy, I'll try to fill her place –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 166). Pencil. Addressed: Vinnie. Unpublished.

The beginning of the letter is wanting. The date is conjectured from the handwriting. The last paragraph seems to respond to details transmitted by Vinnie in a recent letter.

296

To Lavinia N. Dickinson *Cambridge, November 1864*

Does Vinnie think of Sister? Sweet news. Thank Vinnie.

Emily may not be able as she was, but all she can, she will.

Father told me that you were going. I wept for the little Plants, but rejoiced for you.

Had I loved them as well as I did, I could have begged you to stay with them, but they are Foreigners, now, and all, a Foreigner.

I have been sick so long I do not know the Sun.

I hope they may be alive, for Home would be strange except them, now the World is dead.

Anna Norcross lives here, since Saturday, and two new people more, a person and his wife, so I do little but fly, yet always find a nest.

I shall go Home in two weeks. You will get me at Palmer, yourself. Let no one beside come.

Love for Eliza, and Mr Dudley.

Sister.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 153; *LL* 258; *L* (1931) 151; *Home* 435.

Vinnie is about to visit Eliza and John Dudley at Middletown, Connecticut. The letter was written about 6 November, for ED returned home on the twenty-first.

297

To Lavinia N. Dickinson *Cambridge, 13 November 1864*

. . . Her, when I get Home. The Doctor will let me go Monday of Thanksgiving week. He wants to see me Sunday, so I cannot before. Vinnie will go to Palmer for me certainly?

I took the little Sac to wear in walking, under Cloak, to keep away more cold. I did not think to tell before.

Vinnie will forgive me?

Love for the Middletown Pearls. Shall write Eliza after Tuesday, when I go to the Doctor. Thank her for sweet note.

The Drums keep on for the still Man, but Emily must stop.

Love of Fanny and Loo.

Sister.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. The beginning is missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 153; *LL* 258; *L* (1931) 151; *Home* 435–436.

Internal evidence clearly places this letter in November 1864, about the thirteenth. Thanksgiving was on the twenty-fourth, and ED returned on Monday the twenty-first. Vinnie at the moment is visiting the Dudleys. The "still Man" seems to be Lincoln, who was reelected on 8 November. The *Boston Post* reported on Monday, 14 November: "The Lincoln Clubs of Cambridge had a torchlight procession last evening, and invited Hon. Samuel Hooper, and were addressed by that gentleman." By "Drums" ED evidently refers to the Cambridge celebration. For a similar reference to *drums*, many years later, see letter no. 950.

298

To Louise and Frances Norcross *1864?*

. . . Sorrow seems more general than it did, and not the estate of a few persons, since the war began; and if the anguish of others helped one with one's own, now would be many medicines.

'Tis dangerous to value, for only the precious can alarm. I noticed that Robert Browning had made another poem, and was astonished – till I remembered that I, myself, in my smaller way, sang off charnel steps. Every day life feels mightier, and what we have the power to be, more stupendous.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 243–244; *LL* 229–230; *L* (1931) 225–226.

This extract is not datable beyond the fact that the opening statement places it later in the War years. Browning's *Dramatis Personae* was published in 1864.

299

To Samuel Bowles *about 1864*

Mr Bowles.

Keep the Yorkshire Girls, if you please, with the faith of their friend, and your's.

E.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 203.

It will be apparent from the next letter that Bowles returned ED's copy of the Brontë sisters' poems. See the letter written to ED by Thomas Niles, 31 March 1883 (no. 813b), where he too returns a copy of "Currer, Ellis & Acton Bells Poems." It may have been the same copy that she offered Bowles. If the copy survives, it has not been located.

300

To Samuel Bowles *about 1864*

Dear friend.

How hard to thank you – but the large Heart requites itself. Please to need me – I wanted to ask you to receive *Mr* Browning – from me – but you denied my Bronte – so I did not dare – Is it too late – now? I should like so much, to remind you – how kind you had been to *me*.

You could choose – as you did before – if it would not be obnoxious – except where you "measured by *your* heart," you should measure – *this* time – by *mine*. I wonder which would be biggest!

Austin told – Saturday morning – that you were not so well. 'Twas Sundown – all day – Saturday – and Sunday – such a long Bridge – no news of you – could cross! Teach us to miss you *less* – because the fear to miss you *more* – haunts us – all the time. We did'nt *care* so much –

once – I wish it was *then – now* – but you kept tightening – so – it cant be *stirred – today* – You did'nt *mean* to be worse – did you? Was'nt it a *mistake*? Wont you decide soon – to be the strong man we first knew? 'Twould *lighten* things – so much – and yet *that* man – was not so dear – I guess you'd better *not*.

We pray for you – every night – a homely shrine – our knee – but Madonna looks at the Heart – first. Dear friend – dont discourage!

Affy, Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 215–216; *LL* 254; *L* (1931) 203–204.

For another reference to Browning, whose *Dramatis Personae* was published in 1864, see letter no. 298.

301

To Louise Norcross *early 1865?*

Dear Loo,

This is my letter – an ill and peevish thing, but when my eyes get well I'll send you thoughts like daisies, and sentences could hold the bees . . .

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 256; *LL* 265; *L* (1931) 236.

The tone suggests that this letter may have been written about the first of the year.

302

To Louise Norcross *early 1865*

All that my eyes will let me shall be said for Loo, dear little solid gold girl. I am glad to the foot of my heart that you will go to Middletown. It will make you warm. Touches "from home," tell Gungl, are better than "sounds."

You persuade me to speak of my eyes, which I shunned doing, because I wanted you to rest. I could not bear a single sigh should tarnish your vacation, but, lest through me one bird delay a change of latitude, I will tell you, dear.

The eyes are as with you, sometimes easy, sometimes sad. I think they are not worse, nor do I think them better than when I came home.

The snow-light offends them, and the house is bright; notwithstanding, they hope some. For the first few weeks I did nothing but comfort my plants, till now their small green cheeks are covered with smiles. I chop the chicken centres when we have roast fowl, frequent now, for the hens contend and the Cain is slain. . . . Then I make the yellow to the pies, and bang the spice for cake, and knit the soles to the stockings I knit the bodies to last June. They say I am a "help." Partly because it is true, I suppose, and the rest applause. Mother and Margaret are so kind, father as gentle as he knows how, and Vinnie good to me, but "cannot see why I don't get well." This makes me think I am long sick, and this takes the ache to my eyes. I shall try to stay with them a few weeks more before going to Boston, though what it would be to see you and have the doctor's care – that cannot be told. You will not wait for me. Go to Middletown now. I wish I were there, myself, to start your little feet "lest they seem to come short of it." I have so much to tell I can tell nothing, except a sand of love. When I dare I shall ask if I may go, but that will not be now.

Give my love to my lamp and spoon, and the small Lantana. Kindest remembrance for all the house, and write next from Middletown. Go, little girl, to Middletown. Life is so fast it will run away, notwithstanding our sweetest *whoa.*

Already they love you. Be but the maid you are to me, and they will love you more.

Carry your heart and your curls, and nothing more but your fingers. Mr. D[udley] will ask for these every candle-light. How I miss ten robins that never flew from the rosewood nest!

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 255–256; *LL* 264–265; *L* (1931) 235–236.

Among the selections in the bound volume of ED's music (HCL) is *Sounds from Home,* a set of waltzes by the Hungarian composer Josef Gung'l (1810–1889). ED's eyes continued to trouble her, and early in 1865 she made plans to return to Boston for a second series of treatments by Dr. Williams. This letter appears to answer one from Louise Norcross inquiring whether she will have time to visit the Dudleys before expecting ED, who plans to begin the treatments about the first of April.

303

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *early 1865?*

Thank Sue, but not tonight.
Further Nights.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 31). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *LL* 62.
The handwriting is that of about 1865. The note may have been written between February and April, in which latter month she returned to Boston for further eye treatment.

304

To Louise Norcross *March 1865*

. . . I am glad my little girl is at peace. Peace is a deep place. Some, too faint to push, are assisted by angels.

I have more to say to you all than March has to the maples, but then I cannot write in bed. I read a few words since I came home – John Talbot's parting with his son, and Margaret's with Suffolk. I read them in the garret, and the rafters wept.

Remember me to your company, their Bedouin guest.

Every day in the desert, Ishmael counts his tents. New heart makes new health, dear.

Happiness is haleness. I dreamed last night I heard bees fight for pond-lily stamens, and waked with a fly in my room.

Shall you be strong enough to lift me by the first of April? I won't be half as heavy as I was before. I will be good and chase my spools.

I shall think of my little Eve going away from Eden. Bring me a jacinth for every finger, and an onyx shoe.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 253–254; *LL* 264; *L* (1931) 234.
Louise is with the Dudleys. ED has been reading scenes from 1 Henry VI.

305

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *March 1865*

Dear Sue –

Unable are the Loved – to die –
For Love is immortality –
Nay – it is Deity –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 18). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 263.
The date, conjectured from the handwriting, is confirmed by the circumstances. Susan's sister, Harriet Gilbert Cutler, died, 18 March 1865.

306

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about March 1865*

You must let me go first, Sue, because I live in the Sea always and know the Road.

I would have drowned twice to save you sinking, dear, If I could only have covered your Eyes so you would'nt have seen the Water.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 162). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *LL* 100, in part; *FF* 270.
This is in the handwriting of the note preceding, and may have been written about the same time. The tropes involving water are especially predominant in messages written during the period that ED was under treatment for her eyes. See, for instance, letters no. 294 and 466.

307

To Louise Norcross *March 1865*

Dear Sister,

Brother has visited, and the night is falling, so I must close with a little hymn.

I had hoped to express more. Love more I never can, sweet D[udleys] or yourself.

This was in the white of the year,
That was in the green.
Drifts were as difficult then to think,
As daisies now to be seen.
Looking back is best that is left,
Or if it be before,
Retrospection is prospect's half,
Sometimes almost more.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 254; *LL* 265–266; *L* (1931) 234.

This letter was written shortly before ED returned to Cambridge, evidently while Louise was still with the Dudleys.

308

To Lavinia N. Dickinson — *Cambridge, mid-May 1865*

Dear Vinnie

The Hood is far under way and the Girls think it a Beauty. I am so glad to make it for you, who made so much for me.

I hope the Chimneys are done and the Hemlocks set, and the Two Teeth filled, in the Front yard — How astonishing it will be to me.

I hope Mother is better, and will be careful of her Eye.

The Doctor says it must heal while warm Weather lasts, or it will be more troublesome.

How is Margarets lameness? Tell her the Girl's name, here, is Margaret, which makes me quite at Home.

The Pink Lily you gave Loo, has had five flowers since I came, and has more Buds. The Girls think it my influence.

Is Sue still improving? Give her love from us all, and how much we talk of her.

Loo wishes she knew Father's view of Jeff Davis' capture — thinks no one but He, can do it justice.

She wishes to send a Photograph of the Arrest to Austin, including the Skirt and Spurs, but fears he will think her trifling with him. I advised her not to be rash. How glad I should be to see you all, but

it wont be long, Vinnie – You will be willing, wont you, for a little while.

It has rained, and been very hot, and Mosquitoes as in August. I hope the flowers are well. The Tea Rose I gave Aunt Lavinia has a flower, now.

Much love for both Houses, from the Girls and me. Is the Lettuce ripe.

Shall you go to Springfield? Persons wear no Bonnets here. Fanny has a Blade of Straw, with Handle of Ribbon.

Aff, Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 152–153, in part; *LL* 257–258, in part; *L* (1931) 149–150, in part; *Home* 436–437, entire.

Jefferson Davis was captured on 10 May 1865.

309

To Lavinia N. Dickinson *Cambridge, May 1865*

. . . Town Meeting –

Do not get tired, Vinnie, or troubled about things – all I can do, leave till I come –

I have more to say than I can, but Loo goes now to the Office – Am happy to hear of Hemlocks – Love for All and dont work too hard, picking up after Chimneys – The Grass will cover it all up, and I can sweep, next Fall – The Girls were never dearer or kinder and say much of you and Mother, and ask many questions of Sue – I will write again after seeing the Doctor –

Aff, Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 167). Pencil. Unpublished.

This letter, the first part of which is wanting, seems to follow the preceding, and answers one from Lavinia saying that the hemlock trees have been planted. There was a special town meeting, called on 15 May 1865, to discuss plans for establishing the Agricultural College at Amherst.

310

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1865*

Are you sure we are making the most of it?

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 1). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *LL* 57.
The date is conjectured from the handwriting. ED returned from Cambridge in October. The exuberance of the tone suggests that it was dispatched to Sue after her return, rather than before her departure for Cambridge in April.

311

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *early November 1865*

Dear Sister,

Father called to say that our steelyard was fraudulent, exceeding by an ounce the rates of honest men. He had been selling oats. I cannot stop smiling, though it is hours since, that even our steelyard will not tell the truth.

Besides wiping the dishes for Margaret, I wash them now, while she becomes Mrs. Lawler, vicarious papa to four previous babes. Must she not be an adequate bride?

I winced at her loss, because I was in the habit of her, and even a new rolling-pin has an embarrassing element, but to all except anguish, the mind soon adjusts.

It is also November. The noons are more laconic and the sundowns sterner, and Gibraltar lights make the village foreign. November always seemed to me the Norway of the year. [Susan] is still with the sister who put her child in an ice nest last Monday forenoon. The redoubtable God! I notice where Death has been introduced, he frequently calls, making it desirable to forestall his advances.

It is hard to be told by the papers that a friend is failing, not even know where the water lies. Incidentally, only, that he comes to land. Is there no voice for these? Where is Love today?

Tell the dear Doctor we mention him with a foreign accent, party

already to transactions spacious and untold. Nor have we omitted to breathe shorter for our little sister. Sharper than dying is the death for the dying's sake.

News of these would comfort, when convenient or possible.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 176–177; *L* (1931) 169–170; *LH* 69–70.

Letters written to Mrs. Holland in the three-year interval since the last (no. 269) do not survive, but the tone of this one certainly suggests that there had been no hiatus in their correspondence. Margaret O'Brien (sometimes O'Bryan) married Stephen Lawler on 18 October; it was her first marriage and his second (see Appendix 2). Martha Gilbert Smith's two-year-old daughter died on 3 November; an infant son had died in 1861.

The word *failing* in the fifth paragraph is probably a misprint for *sailing*. Samuel Bowles sailed from San Francisco on 28 October, and the *Republican* announced his return but did not name the port for which he was bound. (A photograph of Bowles made at this time is mentioned in letter no. 962.) The remark about Dr. Holland probably alludes to the fact that his *Life of Abraham Lincoln* (1865) was at the moment being translated into German, an item of news which one supposes Mrs. Holland had passed on to ED; the volume was issued in Springfield from the same press that published the version in English. Mrs. Holland must also have commented on the fact that a friend was dying, evidently a person unknown to ED.

312

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *early December 1865*

Sister,

We both are Women, and there is a Will of God – Could the Dying confide Death, there would be no Dead – Wedlock is shyer than Death. Thank you for Tenderness –

I find it is the only food that the Will takes, nor that from general fingers – I am glad you go – It does not remove you – I seek you first in Amherst, then turn my thoughts without a Whip – so well they follow you –

An Hour is a Sea
Between a few, and me –
With them would Harbor be –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 78). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *AM* CXV (1915) 37, in part; *LL* 49, in part; FF 236, in part.

ED's friend Susan Phelps died, 2 December 1865. Susan Dickinson was still with her sister Martha Smith, in Geneva, New York.

313

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *late 1865?*

Dear Sister,

It was incredibly sweet that Austin had seen you, and had stood in the dear house which had lost its friend. To see one who had seen you was a strange assurance. It helped dispel the fear that you departed too, for nothwithstanding the loved notes and the lovely gift, there lurked a dread that you had gone or would seek to go. "Where the treasure is," there is the prospective.

Austin spoke very warmly and strongly of you, and we all felt firmer, and drew a vocal portrait of Kate at Vinnie's request, so vivid that we saw her. . . .

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 177; *L* (1931) 171; *LH* 72.

The conclusion has been deleted. The date, at best conjectural, is that assigned in *Letters*, and followed in *LH*. The poem beginning "Not all die early, dying young" is not a part of the letter, though in *Letters* it seems to conclude it, and is so printed in *LH*.

The friend whom the Hollands lost has not been identified. The quotation is from Matthew 6.21 (also Luke 12.34).

VIII

LETTERS

314–337

[1866–1869]

A Letter always feels to me
like immortality because it is
the mind alone without corporeal friend.

[1866–1869]

The total number of known letters for the four years that conclude the decade of the sixties is the smallest by far that Emily Dickinson is known to have written during her mature years. The reason probably is not that some letters of this period are irrecoverable. Psychologically she was dormant. The great poetic drive was suddenly at an end, and though she would continue to write poems, she would never again match the fecundity of the years just concluded.

Such a change must have been for her, in both her conscious and unconscious relations, a taxing experience which reflected itself in the pace of her living. The year 1867, for instance, remains almost totally blank. But one letter can assuredly be placed within it. A handful of poems are conjecturally so assigned simply because there is no reason to think that the year ceased to exist for her.

The eye affliction is never alluded to again, and seems not to have troubled her capacity to read and write with comfort. Her few correspondents at this time are the familiar ones, principally Colonel Higginson and Mrs. Holland. On the whole, this group suggests that she is trying to restore her strength and build up a new reserve.

314

To T. W. Higginson *late January 1866*

Carlo died –

E. Dickinson

Would you instruct me now?

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 64). Ink. Dated: Amherst. Envelope addressed: Col. T. W. Higginson/Newport/Rhode Island. Postmarked: Hadley Ms Jan 27.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (October 1891) 450; *L* (1931) 281.

This brief note, in which was enclosed the poem "Further in Summer than the Birds," attempts to reestablish a correspondence that had lapsed for eighteen months. ED's dog Carlo had been a favorite companion, and she never got another. (See letter no. 34.)

315

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *early March 1866*

. . . the Sere.

Febuary passed like a Skate and I know March. Here is the "light" the Stranger said "was not on land or sea." Myself could arrest it but we'll not chagrin Him. Ned has been ill for a Week, maturing all our faces. He rides his Rocking-Horse today, though looking apparitional.

His Mama just called, leaving a Cashmere print.

Cousin Peter told me the Doctor would address Commencement. Trusting it insure you both for Papa's Fete, I endowed Peter.

We do not always know the source of the smile that flows to us. Ned tells that the Clock purrs and the Kitten ticks. He inherits his Uncle Emily's ardor for the lie.

My flowers are near and foreign, and I have but to cross the floor to stand in the Spice Isles.

The Wind blows gay today and the Jays bark like Blue Terriers.

I tell you what I see. The Landscape of the Spirit requires a lung, but no Tongue. I hold you few I love, till my heart is red as Febuary and purple as March.

Hand for the Doctor.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 20). Pencil. The opening of the letter is missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 168–169, in part; *L* (1931) 170–171, in part; *LH* 73, in part.

ED's cousin Perez Cowan was a senior in Amherst College. "The light that never was, on sea or land" is from William Wordsworth's *Elegiac Stanzas*. ED has placed a "1" over *sea* and a "2" over *land*. The same line is quoted in letter no. 394.

316

To T. W. Higginson *early 1866*

Dear friend.

Whom my Dog understood could not elude others.

I should be glad to see you, but think it an apparitional pleasure – not to be fulfilled. I am uncertain of Boston.

I had promised to visit my Physician for a few days in May, but Father objects because he is in the habit of me.

Is it more far to Amherst?

You would find a minute Host but a spacious Welcome –

Lest you meet my Snake and suppose I deceive it was robbed of me – defeated too of the third line by the punctuation. The third and fourth were one – I had told you I did not print – I feared you might think me ostensible. If I still entreat you to teach me, are you much displeased?

I will be patient – constant, never reject your knife and should my my [*sic*] slowness goad you, you knew before myself that

Except the smaller size
No lives are round –
These – hurry to a sphere
And show and end –

The larger – slower grow
And later hang –
The Summers of Hesperides
Are long.

Dickinson

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 59). Ink. Dated: Amherst. Envelope addressed: Col. T. W. Higginson/Newport/Rhode Island.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (October 1891) 451; in part; *L* (1894) 312, in part; *LL* 268–269, in part; *L* 281–282, entire, with facsimile reproduction of part, facing page 282. There is no stanza break in this version.

ED enclosed one poem in the letter: "A Death blow is a Life blow to some," together with a clipping of "The Snake" from the 17 February issue of the *Springfield Weekly Republican*. This replies to a letter from Higginson which expressed a desire to see her, and evidently called her "elusive." In the opening sentence it is to herself that she refers as "Whom." Her poem "A narrow Fellow in the Grass" appeared in both the *Daily* and the *Weekly Republican* during the week of the seventeenth (a Saturday). The full account of the publication is in *Poems* (1955) 713–714. But see also the correction noted by John L. Spicer in *Boston Public Library Quarterly* VIII (July 1956) 135–143.

317

To Catherine Scott Turner (Anthon) *spring 1866?*

Thank you Katie, it *was* relief, you had'nt spoke so long, I got a bad whim –

Please don't leave Emily again, it gnarls her character! You say winter was long. We thought so, too, but it went by – Call nothing long, Katie, that stops! I read about your fire, in the "Midnight Cry" – Vinnie's favourite journal – "Katie is doubtless in *ashes*," I thought, I'm much obliged to God for not burning you up. Sue's little boy rides by with a long stick in his hand, beating imaginary beasts. – He is fond of Hens and other Songsters, and visits a colt in our barn demidaily: The decease of a cat connected with the estate solemnized us Friday. – "Tabby" is still on "praying ground." and catches dandelions mistaking them for *Topaz* mice, – *Will* folks get rested, Katie? – You spoke of "Heaven" you know. "I" will take *so many beds*. Theres

you & me & Vinnie & the "other house." & the *Israelites* & those *Hittite* folks, it *does* appear confused to me! – Come & have tea with us again Katie! *How* it rained that night! We must take many a tea together in a Northeast storm o' Saturday nights, before Da Vinci's Supper!

So tired, Katie, so good night Speak, will it more to

Emily ——

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text is from a transcript (HCL) made by Mrs. Anthon. Unpublished.

The date is conjectural. The description of Ned would fit a boy of four. The last words of the letter are uncertain, and may have been misread by Mrs. Anthon.

318

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *early May 1866*

Dear Sister,

After you went, a low wind warbled through the house like a spacious bird, making it high but lonely. When you had gone the love came. I supposed it would. The supper of the heart is when the guest has gone.

Shame is so intrinsic in a strong affection we must all experience Adam's reticence. I suppose the street that the lover travels is thenceforth divine, incapable of turnpike aims.

That you be with me annuls fear and I await Commencement with merry resignation. Smaller than David you clothe me with extreme Goliath.

Friday I tasted life. It was a vast morsel. A circus passed the house – still I feel the red in my mind though the drums are out.

The book you mention, I have not met. Thank you for tenderness.

The lawn is full of south and the odors tangle, and I hear today for the first the river in the tree.

You mentioned spring's delaying – I blamed her for the opposite. I would eat evanescence slowly.

Vinnie is deeply afflicted in the death of her dappled cat, though I convince her it is immortal which assists her some. Mother resumes

lettuce, involving my transgression – suggestive of yourself, however, which endears disgrace.

"House" is being "cleaned." I prefer pestilence. That is more classic and less fell.

Yours was my first arbutus. It was a rosy boast.

I will send you the first witch hazel.

A woman died last week, young and in hope but a little while – at the end of our garden. I thought since of the power of death, not upon affection, but its mortal signal. It is to us the Nile.

You refer to the unpermitted delight to be with those we love. I suppose that to be the license not granted of God.

> Count not that far that can be had,
> Though sunset lie between –
> Nor that adjacent, that beside,
> Is further than the sun.

Love for your embodiment of it.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 171–172; *L* (1931) 165–166; *LH* 74–75.

Laura Dickey, daughter of L. M. Hills, died at her parents' home on 1 May. The Hills's property adjoined the Dickinsons' on the east. A circus was in town on the third.

319

To T. W. Higginson *9 June 1866*

Dear friend

Please to thank the Lady. She is very gentle to care.

I must omit Boston. Father prefers so. He likes me to travel with him but objects that I visit.

Might I entrust you, as my Guest to the Amherst Inn? When I have seen you, to improve will be better pleasure because I shall know which are the mistakes.

Your opinion gives me a serious feeling. I would like to be what you deem me.

Thank you, I wish for Carlo.

Time is a test of trouble
But not a remedy –
If such it prove, it prove too
There was no malady.

Still I have the Hill, my Gibraltar remnant.

Nature, seems it to myself, plays without a friend.

You mention Immortality.

That is the Flood subject. I was told that the Bank was the safest place for a Finless Mind. I explore but little since my mute Confederate, yet the "infinite Beauty" – of which you speak comes too near to seek.

To escape enchantment, one must always flee.

Paradise is of the option.

Whosoever will Own in Eden notwithstanding Adam and Repeal.

Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 60). Ink. Dated: Amherst. Envelope addressed: Col. T. W. Higginson/Newport/Rhode Island. Postmarked: Hadley Ms Jun 9.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 282–283.

Higginson has again urged her to come to Boston, and this is her second refusal. It is her first invitation that he visit Amherst. In the letter she enclosed four poems: "Blazing in Gold," "Ample make this Bed," "To undertake is to achieve," and "As imperceptibly as Grief."

320

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about August 1866*

Sister

Ned is safe – Just "serenaded" Hannah, and is running off with a Corn Leaf "tail," looking back for cheers, Grandma "hoped" characteristically "he would be a very good Boy."

"Not very dood" he said, sweet defiant child! Obtuse ambition of Grandmamas! I kissed my hand to the early train but forgot to open the Blind, partly explaining your negligence.

Nothing is heard from Worcester though Father demanded a tele-

gram, and the Dudleys delay for weather, so Susan shall see Hugh –

It rains in the Kitchen, and Vinnie trades Blackberries with a Tawny Girl – Guess I wont go out. My Jungle fronts on Wall St – Was the Sea cordial? Kiss him for Thoreau –

Do not fear for Home –

Be a bold Susan –

Clara sold the tobacco, and is good to Ned –

Dreamed of your meeting Tennyson in Ticknor and Fields –

Where the Treasure is, there the Brain is also –

Love for Boy –

Emily

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 59 and B 147). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *AM* CXV (1915) 40, in part; *FF* 256, in part.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. Evidently Susan and Austin were vacationing at the seashore, perhaps in Swampscott, where they sometimes went. Ned was now five. Edward Dickinson's brother William lived in Worcester. John and Eliza Dudley were expected for a visit. "Hugh" has not been identified.

Clara Newman, now twenty, was at this time living with Austin and Susan; the tobacco she has sold presumably was a crop which she herself had raised. The reference to Thoreau is one which Sue would be expected to understand. His *Cape Cod* had been published in 1865, and perhaps Sue and ED had been discussing it. Ticknor and Fields was a well known Boston publishing firm. (See Prose Fragment 7.)

321

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *late November 1866?*

Sister,

A mutual plum is not a plum. I was too respectful to take the pulp and do not like a stone.

Send no union letters. The soul must go by Death alone, so, it must by life, if it is a soul.

If a committee – no matter.

I saw the sunrise on the Alps since I saw you. Travel why to Nature, when she dwells with us? Those who lift their hats shall see her, as devout do God.

I trust you are merry and sound. The chances are all against the dear, when we are not with them, though paws of principalities cannot affront if we are by.

Dr. Vaill called here Monday on his way to your house to get the Doctor to preach for him. Shall search *The Republican* for a brief of the sermon. Today is very homely and awkward as the homely are who have not mental beauty.

The sky is low, the clouds are mean,
A travelling flake of snow
Across a barn or through a rut
Debates if it will go.

A narrow wind complains all day
How someone treated him;
Nature, like us, is sometimes caught
Without her diadem.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 180–181; *L* (1931) 174; *LH* 76–77.

The Reverend Joseph Vaill was pastor of a church in Palmer from 1854 until 1867. The first snow on the Pelham Hills in 1866 fell on 22 November. A separate draft of the poem here incorporated has been dated about 1866: *Poems* (1955) 760–761.

322

To Louise Norcross *1866?*

. . . Oh, Loo, why were the children sent too faint to stand alone? . . . Every hour is anxious now, and heaven protect the lamb who shared her fleece with a timider, even Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 256; *LL* 267; *L* (1931) 236, where these extracts are dated 1866.

The nature of the anxiety has not been explained.

323

To T. W. Higginson *mid-July 1867*

Bringing still my "plea for Culture,"
Would it teach me now?

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 63). Ink. Dated: Amherst. Envelope addressed: Col. T. W. Higginson/Newport/Rhode Island. Postmarked: Middletown Ct Jul 16.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 284.

This brief note enclosed one poem: "The Luxury to apprehend." The postmark suggests that this letter was mailed by some member of the Dickinson family who was visiting the Dudleys in Middletown. No detail whatever, except what this letter reveals, is known about ED during the year 1867, but the probability is that she was not the visitor. Since the Dudleys left Middletown in June 1868, and since Higginson's essay "A Plea for Culture" had appeared in the January 1867, issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, this letter almost certainly was written in 1867. It attempts to renew a correspondence with Higginson that apparently had lapsed after ED's second refusal, in the summer of 1866, to visit Boston (see letter no. 319). It is the only letter known which with reasonable certainty may be assigned to this year.

324

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about April 1868*

Going is less, Sister, long gone from you, yet We who take all with us, leave not much behind – Busy missing you – I have not tasted Spring – Should there be other Aprils, We will perhaps dine –

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 135). Pencil. Addressed: Sue –

PUBLICATION: *AM* CXV (1915) 37, in part; *LL* 57, in part; *FF* 237, in part.

The handwriting is that of about 1868. The letter may be incomplete.

325

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1868*

Susan's Idolator keeps a Shrine for Susan.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 71). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 247.
The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

326

To Mrs. Luke Sweetser *about 1868*

Dear Mrs Sweetser

My Breakfast surpassed Elijah's, though served by Robins instead of Ravens. Affy

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Rosenbach 1170/18 (5). Pencil. Folded and addressed: Mrs Sweetser. Unpublished.

The letter is dated by handwriting, which is that of about 1868. The Sweetsers were near neighbors. Had the letter been sent to some other member of the Sweetser family, ED would have headed it "Mrs. Howard" ("Mrs. Nellie"), or "Aunt Katie." The allusion is to 1 Kings 17. 6: "And the ravens brought [Elijah] bread . . ."

327

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1868*

Dear Sue –

Just say one word,
"Emily has not grieved me"
Sign your name to that and I will wait for the rest.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 80). Pencil. Addressed on the fold: Sue.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 264.
The date is conjectured from the handwriting. Perhaps ED had refused some request.

328

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1868*

That my sweet Sister remind me to thank her for *herself* is valuablest.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 97). Pencil. Unpublished.
The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

329

To Louise and Frances Norcross *late 1868?*

Dear Children,

The little notes shall go as fast as steam can take them.

Our hearts already went. Would we could mail our faces for your dear encouragement.

Remember

The longest day that God appoints
Will finish with the sun.
Anguish can travel to its stake,
And then it must return.

I am in bed to-day – a curious place for me, and cannot write as well as if I was firmer, but love as well, and long more. Tell us all the load. Amherst's little basket is never so full but it holds more. That's a basket's cause. Not a flake assaults my birds but it freezes me. Comfort, little creatures – whatever befall us, this world is but this world. Think of that great courageous place we have never seen!

Write at once, please. I am so full of grief and surprise and physical weakness. I cannot speak until I know.

Lovingly,
Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 257; *LL* 269; *L* (1931) 236–237.
Mrs. Todd dated the letter 1868, presumably because the Norcross sisters assigned that date, though they could recall no trouble at that time.

To T. W. Higginson *June 1869*

Dear friend

A Letter always feels to me like immortality because it is the mind alone without corporeal friend. Indebted in our talk to attitude and accent, there seems a spectral power in thought that walks alone – I would like to thank you for your great kindness but never try to lift the words which I cannot hold.

Should you come to Amherst, I might then succeed, though Gratitude is the timid wealth of those who have nothing. I am sure that you speak the truth, because the noble do, but your letters always surprise me. My life has been too simple and stern to embarrass any.

"Seen of Angels" scarcely my responsibility

It is difficult not to be fictitious in so fair a place, but test's severe repairs are permitted all.

When a little Girl I remember hearing that remarkable passage and preferring the "Power," not knowing at the time that "Kingdom" and "Glory" were included.

You noticed my dwelling alone – To an Emigrant, Country is idle except it be his own. You speak kindly of seeing me. Could it please your convenience to come so far as Amherst I should be very glad, but I do not cross my Father's ground to any House or town.

Of our greatest acts we are ignorant –

You were not aware that you saved my Life. To thank you in person has been since then one of my few requests. The child that asks my flower "Will you," he says – "Will you" – and so to ask for what I want I know no other way.

You will excuse each that I say, because no other taught me?

Dickinson

Manuscript: BPL (Higg 61). Ink. Dated by Higginson: June 1869.

Publication: *AM* LVXIII (October 1891) 451–452, in part; *L* (1894) 313–314, in part; *LL* 270, in part; *L* (1931) 283–284, entire.

ED echoes her opening sentence in a letter to James Clark written in 1882 (no. 788). This is ED's third refusal to go to Boston, and her second invitation to Higginson to come to Amherst, and it answers the letter which follows (HCL), written by Higginson and dated: May 11. 1869. ED's

conviction that Higginson was the friend who saved her life must have been very deep, for she uses the same phrase in a letter written to him ten years later (see no. 621).

The woman Higginson mentions at the end of his first paragraph is Helen Hunt (Jackson). In 1890 Higginson wrote Mrs. Todd (*AB* 82): "H.H. did not know of her poems till I showed them to her (about 1866) and was very little in Amherst after that. But she remembered her at school."

330a

From T. W. Higginson

Sometimes I take out your letters & verses, dear friend, and when I feel their strange power, it is not strange that I find it hard to write & that long months pass. I have the greatest desire to see you, always feeling that perhaps if I could once take you by the hand I might be something to you; but till then you only enshroud yourself in this fiery mist & I cannot reach you, but only rejoice in the rare sparkles of light. Every year I think that I will contrive somehow to go to Amherst & see you: but that is hard, for I often am obliged to go away for lecturing, &c & rarely can go for pleasure. I would gladly go to Boston, at any practicable time, to meet you. I am always the same toward you, & never relax my interest in what you send to me. I should like to hear from you very often, but feel always timid lest what I *write* should be badly aimed & miss that fine edge of thought which you bear. It would be so easy, I fear, to miss you. Still, you see, I try. I think if I could once see you & know that you are real, I might fare better. It brought you nearer e[ven] to know that you had an actual [?] uncle, though I can hardly fancy [any?] two beings less alike than yo[u] [&?] him. But I have not seen him [for] several years, though I have seen [a lady] who once knew you, but could [not] tell me much.

It is hard [for me] to understand how you can live s[o alo]ne, with thoughts of such a [quali]ty coming up in you & even the companionship of your dog withdrawn. Yet it isolates one anywhere to think beyond a certain point or have such luminous flashes as come to you – so perhaps the place does not make much difference.

You must come down to Boston sometimes? All ladies do. I wonder if it would be possible to lure you [to] the meetings on the 3d Monday of every month at Mrs. [Sa]rgent's 13 Chestnut St. at 10 am – when somebody reads [a] paper & others talk or listen. Next Monday Mr. Emerson [rea]ds & then at 3½ P.M. there is a meeting of the Woman's [Cl]ub at 3 Tremont Place, where I read a paper on the [Gre]ek goddesses. That would be a good time for you to come [alth]ough I should still rather have you come on some [da]y when I shall not be so much taken up – for my object is to see you, more than to entertain you. I shall be in Boston also during anniversary week, June 25 * & 28, – or will the Musical Festival in June tempt you down. You see I am in earnest. Or don't you need sea air in summer. Write & tell me something in prose or verse, & I will be less fastidious in future & willing to write clumsy things, rather than none.

Ever your friend

[*signature cut out*]

* There is an extra meeting at Mrs. Sargent's that day & Mr. Weiss reads an essay. I have a right to invite you & you can merely ring & walk in.

331

To Louise and Frances Norcross *summer 1869?*

. . . J—— is coming to put away her black hair on the children's pillow. I hoped she'd come while you were here, to help me with the starch, but Satan's ways are not as our ways. I'm straightening all the property, and making things erect and smart, and tomorrow, at twilight, her little heel boots will thump into Amherst. It being summer season she will omit the sleigh-bell gown, and that's a palliative. Vinnie is all disgust, and I shall have to smirk for two to make the manners even.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 270; *L* (1931) 247.

Louise Norcross was in Amherst during the spring of 1869. The person described may be ED's aunt Elizabeth (Libbie). "J" could easily have been a misreading for "L." (See letters no. 286 and 473.)

To Perez Cowan *October 1869*

These Indian-Summer Days with their peculiar Peace remind me of those stillest things that no one can disturb and knowing you are not at Home and have a sister less I liked to try to help you. You might not need assistance?

You speak with so much trust of that which only trust can prove, it makes me feel away, as if my English mates spoke sudden in Italian.

It grieves me that you speak of Death with so much expectation. I know there is no pang like that for those we love, nor any leisure like the one they leave so closed behind them, but Dying is a wild Night and a new Road.

I suppose we are all thinking of Immortality, at times so stimulatedly that we cannot sleep. Secrets are interesting, but they are also solemn – and speculate with all our might, we cannot ascertain.

I trust as Days go on your sister is more Peace than Pang – though to learn to spare is a sharp acquirement. The subject hurts me so that I will put it down, because it hurts you.

We bruise each other less in talking than in writing, for then a quiet accent helps words themselves too hard.

Do you remember Peter, what the Physician said to Macbeth? "That sort must heal itself."

I am glad you are working. Others are anodyne. You remembered Clara.

The Wedding was small, but lovely, and the sisters have gone. I give you a look of her flowers as Sue and Austin arranged them.

Tell us more of yourself, when you have time and please.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: NYPL (Berg Collection). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *Libbie Auction Catalogue* (of the Edward Abbott collection), 25, 26 February 1909, 6 pp.; *N & Q* 163:25 (1932), 441, in part.

Cowan was ordained 8 April 1869, and was still unmarried. Clara Newman married Sidney Turner, 14 October 1869. For the quotation from *Macbeth*, see letters no. 669 and 986.

333

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *autumn 1869*

To take away our Sue leaves but a lower World, her firmamental quality our more familiar Sky.

It is not Nature – dear, but those that stand for Nature.

The Bird would be a soundless thing without Expositor. Come Home and see your Weather. The Hills are full of Shawls, and I am going every Day to buy myself a Sash.

Grandma moans for Neddie, and Austin's face is soft as Mist when he hears his name. Tell "Dexter" I miss his little team.

I humbly try to fill your place at the Minister's, so faint a competition, it only makes them smile.

Mattie is stern and lovely – literary, they tell me – a graduate of Mother Goose and otherwise ambitious.

We have a new man whose name is Tim.

Father calls him "Timothy" and the Barn sounds like the Bible.

Vinnie is still on her "Coast Survey" and I am so hurried with Parents that I run all Day with my tongue abroad, like a Summer Dog.

Tell Mattie for me glad little Girl is safe, and congratulate minor little Girl on her priceless Mama. Susan's

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 185). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 239–240, in part.

Vinnie was in Boston during the autumn of 1869. With Ned, now eight, Susan was visiting her sister Martha Smith at Geneva, New York. Martha Dickinson, the first Mattie mentioned, was then three years old. Elizabeth Throop Smith, the "minor little Girl," was an infant. The minister is J. L. Jenkins. On "Timothy," see Appendix 2.

334

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1869*

The things of which we want the proof are those we knew before –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 20). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *LL* 62.

This and the two following notes, all written to Susan Dickinson, are in the handwriting of about 1869.

335

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1869*

Dont do such things, dear Sue – The "Arabian Nights" unfit the heart for it's Arithmetic –

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 70). Pencil. Addressed: Sue.
PUBLICATION: *LL* 62.

336

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1869*

Rare to the Rare –

Her Sovreign People
Nature knows as well
And is as fond of signifying
As if fallible –

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: Smith College. Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *Daily Hampshire Gazette,* 18 December 1952; *Poems* (1955) 800.

337

To Louise Norcross *late 1869*

Vinnie was "gone" indeed and is due to-day, and before the tumult that even the best bring we will take hold of hands. It was sweet and antique as birds to hear Loo's voice, worth the lying awake from five o'clock summer mornings to hear. I rejoice that my wren can rise and touch the sky again. We all have moments with the dust, but the dew is given. Do you wish you heard "A[ustin] talk"? Then I would you did, for then you would be here always, a sweet premium. Would you like to "step in the kitchen"? Then you shall by faith, which is the first sight. Mr. C[hurch] is not in the tree, because the rooks won't let him, but I ate a pear as pink as a plum that he made last spring,

when he was ogling you. Mother has on the petticoat you so gallantly gathered while he sighed and grafted.

Tabby is eating a stone dinner from a stone plate, . . . Tim is washing Dick's feet, and talking to him now and then in an intimate way. Poor fellow, how he warmed when I gave him your message! The red reached clear to his beard, he was so gratified; and Maggie stood as still for hers as a puss for patting. The hearts of these poor people lie so unconcealed you bare them with a smile.

Thank you for recollecting my weakness. I am not so well as to forget I was ever ill, but better and working. I suppose we must all "ail till evening."

Read Mr. Lowell's *Winter*. One does not often meet anything so perfect.

In many little corners how much of Loo I have.

Maggie "dragged" the garden for this bud for you. You have heard of the "last rose of summer." This is that rose's son.

Into the little port you cannot sail unwelcome at any hour of day or night. Love for Fanny, and stay close to

Emily

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 258; *L* (1931) 237–238.

This letter, written with the casual intimacy which characterizes those addressed to the Norcross girls, draws to an unusual extent upon the literary and domestic associations which the girls will understand. At the household level ED speaks about the horse Dick, about Tim (Scannell?), Maggie Maher, and Horace Church (see Appendix 2 for identification of the persons named). The phrase "ail till evening" recalls Browning's *Sordello* (see letter 477). Thomas Moore's "The Last Rose of Summer," set to music, was in any volume of familiar songs. The *Atlantic Almanac* (profusely illustrated and edited, with literary selections, by Oliver Wendell Holmes and Donald Grant Mitchell) in its issue for 1870 carried two prose essays that would have special appeal for ED: one by Higginson, titled "Swimming"; and one by James Russell Lowell, "A Good Word for Winter." It is this latter essay, almost certainly, which she here warmly recommends to Louise Norcross.

IX

LETTERS

338–431

[1870–1874]

I find ecstasy in living –
the mere sense of living
is joy enough.

[1870–1874]

With the year 1870 the number of surviving letters markedly increases, and the fact is that events at this time helped to stimulate the flow of correspondence with the two friends to whom Emily Dickinson then was writing her most interesting letters. In May 1870 the Holland family returned from a two-year sojourn in Europe. In August Higginson paid his first and long hoped-for visit. After eight years of baffling correspondence, he found the meeting so stimulating that he recorded it fully in his diary and in letters to his wife and sister.

Important events in the lives of other friends called for attention, and the first letter in the group was written in response to the news of the death of a son of her favorite aunt.

But in 1870 she was in her fortieth year, and thus the important events in the lives of those in her own generation were usually leading to fulfillment. The death of her cousin Henry Sweetser did not touch her closely, for she scarcely knew him. The death of her father, in 1874, was the first major encroachment upon the routines of duty and love which she now made her total concern.

338

To Mrs. Joseph A. Sweetser *late February 1870*

My sweet Aunt Katie.

When I am most grieved I had rather no one would speak to me, so I stayed from you, but I thought by today, perhaps you would like to see me, if I came quite soft and brought no noisy words. But when I am most sorry, I can say nothing so I will only kiss you and go far away. Who could ache for you like your little Niece – who knows how deep the Heart is and how much it holds?

I know we shall certainly see what we loved the most. It is sweet to think they are safe by Death and that that is all we have to pass to obtain their face.

There are no Dead, dear Katie, the Grave is but our moan for them.

Were it to be the last
How infinite would be
What we did not suspect was marked
Our final interview.

Henry had been a prisoner. How he had coveted Liberty probably his Redeemer knew – and as we keep surprise for those most precious to us, brought him his Ransom in his sleep.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Rosenbach 1170/18 (27). Ink. Unpublished.

The Sweetser's eldest son, Henry Edwards, a young journalist of thirty-three, died on 17 February, after a long illness. He had collaborated with his cousin Charles Sweetser in founding the periodical *The Round Table*. The quatrain is in *Poems* (1955) 812.

339

To Louise and Frances Norcross *early spring 1870*

Dear Children,

I think the bluebirds do their work exactly like me. They dart

around just so, with little dodging feet, and look so agitated. I really feel for them, they seem to be so tried.

The mud is very deep – up to the wagons' stomachs – arbutus making pink clothes, and everything alive.

Even the hens are touched with the things of Bourbon, and make republicans like me feel strangely out of scene.

Mother went rambling, and came in with a burdock on her shawl, so we know that the snow has perished from the earth. Noah would have liked mother.

I am glad you are with Eliza. It is next to shade to know that those we love are cool on a parched day.

Bring my love to —— and Mr. ——. You will not need a hod. C[lara] writes often, full of joy and liberty. I guess it is a case of peace. . . .

Pussy has a daughter in the shavings barrel.

Father steps like Cromwell when he gets the kindlings.

Mrs. S[weetser] gets bigger, and rolls down the lane to church like a reverend marble. Did you know little Mrs. Holland was in Berlin for her eyes? . . .

Did you know about Mrs. J——? She fledged her antique wings. 'Tis said that "nothing in her life became her like the leaving it."

Great Streets of Silence led away
To Neighborhoods of Pause –
Here was no Notice – no Dissent,
No Universe – no Laws –

By Clocks – 'twas Morning, and for Night
The Bells at Distance called –
But Epoch had no basis here,
For Period exhaled.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed. The text of *Letters* (1931), where the letter but not the poem is published, is followed here. The poem follows the AC autograph, as published in *Poems* (1955) 810.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 259–260; *LL* 271–272, in part; *L* (1931) 238–239. In all three the poem is omitted, but in both editions of *L* is is indicated as being part of the letter.

In the early spring of 1870 the Norcross sisters went to Milwaukee to be with their cousin Eliza Dudley, now an invalid. The Hollands returned from their trip to Europe in May. The person identified as C[lara] is probably Clara Newman Turner, who married Sidney Turner of Norwich, Connecticut, 14 October 1869. Mrs. Luke Sweetser was a rotund lady whose interest in fashions was locally recognized. (See letter no. 389.) The paraphrase in the last sentence is from *Macbeth*, I, iv, 7–8: "Nothing in his life/Became him like the leaving it. . ."

340

To Louise Norcross *May 1870?*

This little sheet of paper has lain for several years in my Shakespeare, and though it is blotted and antiquated is endeared by its resting-place.

I always think of you peculiarly in May, as it is the peculiar anniversary of your loving kindness to me, though you have always been dear cousins, and blessed me all you could.

I cooked the peaches as you told me, and they swelled to beautiful fleshy halves and tasted quite magic. The beans we fricasseed and they made a savory cream in cooking that "Aunt Emily" liked to sip. She was always fonder of julep food than of more substantial. Your remembrance of her is very sweetly touching.

Maggie is ironing, and a cotton and linen and ruffle heat makes the pussy's cheeks red. It is lonely without the birds to-day, for it rains badly, and the little poets have no umbrellas. . . .

. . . Fly from Emily's window for Loo. Botanical name unknown.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 260–261; *LL* 272, in part; *L* (1931) 239, and dated: May 1870.

In *Letters* (1894) and later, the final sentences are separated as above from the main text. They may or may not be a part of this letter. It is stated that they enclosed a pressed insect. ED is thinking of May as the anniversary month when she stayed in Cambridge, in 1864 and 1865, with the Norcrosses.

341

To Samuel Bowles *June 1870?*

He is alive, this morning –
He is alive – and awake –
Birds are resuming for Him –
Blossoms – dress for His Sake.
Bees – to their Loaves of Honey
Add an Amber Crumb
Him – to regale – Me – Only –
Motion, and am dumb.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: *HCL* (263). Pencil. Addressed on the fold: Mr Bowles –
PUBLICATION: *Poems* (1955) 811.

In June 1870 Mr. and Mrs. Bowles were overnight guests of the Dickinsons. It might have been on that occasion that the poem was written, but since it remained among her own papers it was probably never delivered.

342

To T. W. Higginson *16 August 1870*

Dear friend

I will be at Home and glad.

I think you said the 15th. The incredible never surprises us because it is the incredible.

E. Dickinson

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 62). Ink. Envelope addressed: Mr Higginson.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 314; *LL* 275; *L* (1931) 284.

This note was delivered evidently by hand at the Amherst House, in response to one Higginson sent ED on his arrival, asking if he might call. She had expected him on the previous day, Monday. The following letter (BPL) Higginson wrote his wife that evening, dating it: Amherst/Tuesday 10 P.M.:

I shan't sit up tonight to write you all about E.D. dearest but if you had read Mrs. Stoddard's novels you could understand a house where each member runs his or her own selves. Yet I only saw her.

A large county lawyer's house, brown brick, with great trees & a garden – I sent up my card. A parlor dark & cool & stiffish, a few books & engravings & an open piano – Malbone & O D [Out Door] Papers among other books.

A step like a pattering child's in entry & in glided a little plain woman with two smooth bands of reddish hair & a face a little like Belle Dove's; not plainer – with no good feature – in a very plain & exquisitely clean white pique & a blue net worsted shawl. She came to me with two day lilies which she put in a sort of childlike way into my hand & said "These are my introduction" in a soft frightened breathless childlike voice – & added under her breath Forgive me if I am frightened; I never see strangers & hardly know what I say – but she talked soon & thenceforward continuously – & deferentially – sometimes stopping to ask me to talk instead of her – but readily recommencing. Manner between Angie Tilton & Mr. Alcott – but thoroughly ingenuous & simple which they are not & saying many things which you would have thought foolish & I wise – & some things you wd. hv. liked. I add a few over the page.

This is a lovely place, at least the view Hills everywhere, hardly mountains. I saw Dr. Stearns the Pres't of College – but the janitor cd. not be found to show me into the building I may try again tomorrow. I called on Mrs. Banfield & saw her five children – She looks much like H. H. *when ill* & was very cordial & friendly. Goodnight darling I am very sleepy & do good to write you this much. Thine am I

I got here at 2 & leave at 9. E.D. dreamed all night of *you* (not me) & next day got my letter proposing to come here!! She only knew of you through a mention in my notice of Charlotte Hawes.

"Women talk: men are silent: that is why I dread women.

"My father only reads on Sunday – he reads *lonely* & *rigorous* books."

"If I read a book [and] it makes my whole body so cold no fire ever

can warm me I know *that* is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know *that* is poetry. These are the only way I know it. Is there any other way."

"How do most people live without any thoughts. There are many people in the world (you must have noticed them in the street) How do they live. How do they get strength to put on their clothes in the morning"

"When I lost the use of my Eyes it was a comfort to think there were so few real *books* that I could easily find some one to read me all of them"

"Truth is such a *rare* thing it is delightful to tell it."

"I find ecstasy in living — the mere sense of living is joy enough"

I asked if she never felt want of employment, never going off the place & never seeing any visitor "I never thought of conceiving that I could ever have the slightest approach to such a want in all future time" (& added) "I feel that I have not expressed myself strongly enough."

She makes all the bread for her father only likes hers & says "& people must have puddings" this *very* dreamily, as if they were comets — so she makes them.

[That evening Higginson made this entry in his diary (HCL):]

To Amherst, arrived there at 2 Saw Prest Stearns, Mrs. Banfield & Miss Dickinson (twice) a remarkable experience, quite equalling my expectation. A pleasant country town, unspeakably quiet in the summer aftn.

[Next day he wrote his wife again, enclosing further notes (BPL), on ED. He dated the letter: Wednesday noon]:

342b

I am stopping for dinner at White River Junction, dearest, & in a few hours shall be at Littleton thence to go to Bethlehem. This morning at 9 I left Amherst & sent you a letter last night. I shall mail this at L. putting with it another sheet about E.D. that is in my valise.

She said to me at parting "Gratitude is the only secret that cannot reveal itself."

I talked with Prest Stearns of Amherst about her — & found him a very pleasant companion in the cars. Before leaving today, I got in to

the Museums & enjoyed them much; saw a meteoric stone almost as long as my arm & weighing 436 lbs! a big slice of some other planet. It fell in Colorado. The collection of bird tracks of extinct birds in stone is very wonderful & unique & other good things. I saw Mr. Dickinson this morning a little—thin dry & speechless—I saw what her life has been. Dr. S. says her sister is proud of her.

I wd. have stolen a *totty* meteor, dear but they were under glass.

Mrs. Bullard I have just met in this train with spouse & son—I shall ride up with her.

Some pretty glimpses of mts. but all is dry and burnt I never saw the river at Brattleboro so low.

Did I say I staid at Sargents in Boston & she still hopes for Newport.

This picture of Mrs Browning's tomb is from E.D. "Timothy Titcomb" [Dr. Holland] gave it to her.

I think I will mail this here as I hv. found time to write so much. I miss you little woman & wish you were here but you'd hate travelling.

Ever

E D again

"Could you tell me what home is"

"I never had a mother. I suppose a mother is one to whom you hurry when you are troubled."

"I never knew how to tell time by the clock till I was 15. My father thought he had taught me but I did not understand & I was afraid to say I did not & afraid to ask any one else lest he should know."

Her father was not severe I should think but remote. He did not wish them to read anything but the Bible. One day her brother brought home Kavanagh hid it under the piano cover & made signs to her & they read it: her father at last found it & was displeased. Perhaps it was before this that a student of his was amazed that they had never heard of Mrs. [Lydia Maria] Child & used to bring them books & hide in a bush by the door. They were then little things in short dresses with their feet on the rungs of the chair. After the first book she thought in ecstasy "This then is a book! And there are more of them!"

"Is it oblivion or absorption when things pass from our minds?"

Major Hunt interested her more than any man she ever saw. She remembered two things he said—that her great dog "understood gravi-

tation" & when he said he should come again "in a year. If I say a shorter time it will be longer."

When I said I would come again *some time* she said "Say in a long time, that will be nearer. Some time is nothing."

After long disuse of her eyes she read Shakespeare & thought why is any other book needed.

I never was with any one who drained my nerve power so much. Without touching her, she drew from me. I am glad not to live near her. She often thought me *tired* & seemed very thoughtful of others.

[The postscript of a letter Higginson wrote his sisters (HCL) on Sunday, 21 August, adds:]

Of course I hv. enjoyed my trip very very much. In Amherst I had a nice aftn & evng with my singular poetic correspondent & the remarkable cabinets of the College.

[Recalling the interview twenty years later, Higginson wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly* LXVIII (October 1891) 453:]

The impression undoubtedly made on me was that of an excess of tension, and of an abnormal life. Perhaps in time I could have got beyond that somewhat overstrained relation which not my will, but her needs, had forced upon us. Certainly I should have been most glad to bring it down to the level of simple truth and every-day comradeship; but it was not altogether easy. She was much too enigmatical a being for me to solve in an hour's interview, and an instinct told me that the slightest attempt at direct cross-examination would make her withdraw into her shell; I could only sit still and watch, as one does in the woods; I must name my bird without a gun, as recommended by Emerson.

343

To Louise and Frances Norcross *late summer 1870?*

. . . Mother drives with Tim to carry pears to settlers. Sugar pears with hips like hams, and the flesh of bonbons. Vinnie fastens flowers from the frosts. . . .

Lifetime is for two, never for committee.

I saw your Mrs. H——. She looks a little tart, but Vinnie says makes excellent pies after one gets acquainted.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 263; *LL* 274; *L* (1931) 241, where it is dated 1870.

Tim, the stableman, came to the Dickinsons in 1868.

344

To Louise and Frances Norcross *1870?*

Dear Children,

When I think of your little faces I feel as the band does before it makes its first shout . . .

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 262; *LL* 274; *L* (1931) 241, where it is dated 1870.

345

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *1870?*

My Turks will feel at Home in her familiar East –

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 5). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 241, with the note:" . . . sent with Sweet Sultans."

This and the following five messages sent to Susan Dickinson can be dated only by handwriting. They seem to have been written about the same time.

346

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1870*

To see you unfits for staler meetings.
I dare not risk an intemperate moment before a Banquet of Bran.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 10). Pencil. Addressed: Sue.

PUBLICATION: *LL* 65.

347

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1870*

Oh Matchless Earth – We underrate the chance to dwell in Thee

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 49). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 238.

348

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1870*

We meet no Stranger but Ourself.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 57). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 259.

349

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1870*

Were not Day of itself memorable, dear Sue's remembrance would make it so

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 8). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 241.

350

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1870*

Best Witchcraft is Geometry
To a Magician's eye –

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 23). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *Poems* (1955) 810.
These are the first two lines only of a quatrain which, in another version written at the same time (HCL), reads:

Best Witchcraft is Geometry
To the magician's mind –
His ordinary acts are feats
To thinking of mankind.

351

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *about 1870*

Our little Note was written several days ago, but delayed for Vinnie. Perhaps it's circumstances cease. Tears do not outgrow, however, so I venture sending.

Landscapes reverence the Frost, though it's gripe be past.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 25). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *LH* 86.
The circumstances here referred to have not been identified. The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

352

To T. W. Higginson *26 September 1870*

Enough is so vast a sweetness I suppose it never occurs – only pathetic counterfeits – Fabulous to me as the men of the Revelations who "shall not hunger any more." Even the Possible has it's insoluble particle.

After you went I took Macbeth and turned to "Birnam Wood." Came twice "to Dunsinane" – I thought and went about my work.

I remember your coming as serious sweetness placed now with the Unreal –

Trust adjusts her "Peradventure" –
Phantoms entered "and not you."

The Vein cannot thank the Artery – but her solemn indebtedness to him, even the stolidest admit and so of me who try, whose effort leaves no sound.

You ask great questions accidentally. To answer them would be events. I trust that you are safe.

I ask you to forgive me for all the ignorance I had.

I find no nomination sweet as your low opinion.

Speak, if but to blame your obedient child. You told me of Mrs Lowell's Poems.

Would you tell me where I could find them or are they not for sight?

An article of your's, too, perhaps the only one you wrote that I never knew. It was about a "Latch."

Are you willing to tell me? If I ask too much, you could please refuse – Shortness to live has made me bold.

Abroad is close tonight and I have but to lift my Hands to touch the "Hights of Abraham."

Dickinson

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 65). Ink. Endorsed by TWH: R[eceived] Sept 27, 1870 (after my visit). Envelope addressed: Mr. Higginson.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (October 1891) 453–454; *L* (1894) 315–316, in part; *LL* 276–277, in part; *L* (1931) 288–289.

Relative to the second paragraph: Higginson did in fact make a second call on ED in December 1873. Maria White Lowell's poems were posthumously issued in 1855. Higginson's article about a "Latch" could have been either of two, both on the subject of women's rights: "The Door Unlatched," in *The Woman's Journal*, 15 January 1870 (reprinted on the same day in the *Springfield Republican*); or "The Gate Unlatched," in *The Woman's Journal*, 9 July 1870. "The Hights of Abraham" may be intended to refer to Mount Moriah, but ED's evident fascination with the drama of the Wolfe-Montcalm conflict ("Wolfe demanded during dying") suggests that she has in mind the citadel above Quebec. The quotation is from Revelation 7.16: "They shall hunger no more. . ."

353

To T. W. Higginson *about October 1870*

The Riddle that we guess
We speedily despise –
Not anything is stale so long
As Yesterday's Surprise –

The Risks of Immortality are perhaps its' charm – A secure Delight suffers in enchantment –

The larger Haunted House it seems, of maturer Childhood – distant, an alarm – entered intimate at last as a neighbor's Cottage –

The Spirit said unto the Dust
Old Friend, thou knewest me
And Time went out to tell the news
Unto Eternity –

Those of that renown personally precious, harrow like a Sunset, proved but not obtained –

Tennyson knew this, "Ah Christ – if it be possible" and even in Our Lord's ["]that they be with me where I am," I taste interrogation.

Experiment escorts us last –
His pungent company
Will not allow an Axiom
An Opportunity –

You speak of "tameless tastes" – A Beggar came last week – I gave him Food and Fire and as he went, "Where do you go,"

"In all the directions" –

That was what you meant

Too happy Time dissolves itself
And leaves no remnant by –
'Tis Anguish not a Feather hath
Or too much weight to fly –

I was much refreshed by your strong Letter –

Thank you for Greatness – I will have deserved it in a longer time!

I thought I spoke to you of the shadow –

It affects me –

This was still another –

I saw it's notice in the Papers just before you came – Is there a magazinine called the "Woman's Journal"? I think it was said to be in that – a Gate, or Door, or Latch –

Someone called me suddenly, and I never found it –

You told me Mrs Lowell was Mr Lowell's "inspiration" What is inspiration?

You place the truth in opposite – because the fear is mine, dear friend, and the power your's –

'Tis Glory's far sufficiency — far sufficiency] overtakelessness
that make's our trying poor – — trying] running

With the Kingdom of Heaven on his knee, could Mr Emerson hesitate?

"Suffer little Children" –

Could you not come without the Lecture, if the project failed?

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *NEQ* XXVIII (1955) 297–298.

This is the rough draft of a letter which perhaps was never sent, since no fair copy of it is among the Higginson papers.

ED here expresses in a series of quatrains a condensation of the thoughts that followed her conversation with Higginson in August. The letter replies to one from him, received since her last was written, in which he evidently suggested that the essay of his she might have in mind was "A Shadow" (*Atlantic Monthly*, July 1870). She here makes clear that she had read "A Shadow."

354

To Mrs. J. G. Holland — *early October 1870*

I guess I wont send that note now, for the mind is such a new place, last night feels obsolete.

Perhaps you thought dear Sister, I wanted to elope with you and feared a vicious Father.

It was not quite that.

The Papers thought the Doctor was mostly in New York. Who then would read for you? Mr Chapman, doubtless, or Mr Buckingham! The Doctor's sweet reply makes me infamous.

Life is the finest secret.

So long as that remains, we must all whisper.

With that sublime exception I had no clandestineness.

It was lovely to see you and I hope it may happen again. These beloved accidents must become more frequent.

We are by September and yet my flowers are bold as June. Amherst has gone to Eden.

To shut our eyes is Travel.

The Seasons understand this.

How lonesome to be an Article! I mean – to have no soul.

An Apple fell in the night and a Wagon stopped.
I suppose the Wagon ate the Apple and resumed it's way.
How fine it is to talk.
What Miracles the News is!
Not Bismark but ourselves.

The Life we have is very great.
The Life that we shall see
Surpasses it, we know, because
It is Infinity.
But when all Space has been beheld
And all Dominion shown
The smallest Human Heart's extent
Reduces it to none.

Love for the Doctor, and the Girls.
Ted might not acknowledge me.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 24). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *LH* 84–86.

The Hollands had returned to Springfield in the spring of 1870, and visited in Amherst during the summer. A new enterprise kept Dr. Holland much in New York during October, when the first issue of the magazine he edited, *Scribner's Monthly*, was being prepared for the press. In the person of Bismark, ED alludes to the principal news of the day, the Franco-Prussian war.

355

To Perez Cowan *late October 1870*

Dear Peter

It is indeed sweet news.

I am proud of your happiness. To Peter and Peter's, let me give both Hands. Delight has no Competitor, so it is always most.

"Maggie" is a warm name. I shall like to take it. Home is the definition of God.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Huntington Memorial Library, Oneonta, N. Y. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 332; *LL* 275, in part; *L* (1931) 322.

Perez Cowan, at this time pastor of a Presbyterian church in Rogersville, Tennessee, married Margaret Rhea of Blountville, Tennessee, on 26 October 1870.

356

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *19 December 1870*

Lest any doubt that we are glad that they were born Today
Whose having lived is held by us in noble Holiday
Without the date, like Consciousness or Immortality –
Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 33). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 225, with note: "To Sue with flowers on her birthday"; *Poems* (1955) 809.

The handwriting suggests 1870, the year in which Sue celebrated her fortieth birthday.

357

To Louise and Frances Norcross *December 1870?*

Untiring Little Sisters,

What will I ever do for you, yet have done the most, for love is that one perfect labor nought can supersede. I suppose the pain is still there, for pain that is worthy does not go so soon. The small can crush the great, however, only temporarily. In a few days we examine, muster our forces, and cast it away. Put it out of your hearts, children. Faith is too fair to taint it so. There are those in the morgue that bewitch us with sweetness, but that which is dead must go with the ground. There is a verse in the Bible that says there are those who shall not see death. I suppose them to be the faithful. Love will not expire. There was never the instant when it was lifeless in the world, though the quicker deceit dies, the better for the truth, who is indeed our dear friend.

I am sure you will gain, even from this wormwood. The martyrs may not choose their food.

God made no act without a cause,
Nor heart without an aim,
Our inference is premature,
Our premises to blame.

. . . Sweetest of Christmas to you both, and a better year.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 262; *LL* 273–274; *L* (1931) 240–241.

Although containing Christmas greetings, this letter is chiefly concerned with the emotional difficulties of the sisters, who seem to have found complications in personal relations while living in the home of the Reverend John Dudley in Milwaukee.

358

To Edward (Ned) Dickinson *about 1 January 1871*

Lacking New-Year, without little Ned.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 105). Pencil. Unpublished.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. The note may have accompanied some small gift, sent at a time when Ned was confined by an illness.

359

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *early January 1871*

I have a fear I did not thank you for the thoughtful Candy.
Could you conscientiously dispel it by saying that I did?
Generous little Sister!
I will protect the Thimble till it reaches Home—
Even the Thimble has it's Nest!

The Parting I tried to smuggle resulted in quite a Mob at last! The Fence is the only Sanctuary. That no one invades because no one suspects it.

Why the Thief ingredient accompanies all Sweetness Darwin does not tell us.

Each expiring Secret leaves an Heir, distracting still.

Our unfinished interview like the Cloth of Dreams, cheapens other fabrics.

That Possession fairest lies that is least possest.

Transport's mighty price is no more than he is worth –

Would we sell him for it? That is all his Test.

Dont affront the Eyes –

Little Despots govern worst.

Vinnie leaves me Monday – Spare me your remembrance while I buffet Life and Time without –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 26). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 87.

Early in January Vinnie went to New York to visit the Hills. Mrs. Holland had evidently, on a recent call, forgotten her thimble, which she has asked ED to forward. The expression "Mob at last" implies that ED and Mrs. Holland had tried to converse privately when they parted after Mrs. Holland's call, but had been interrupted. The place probably was the little back hall connected with the kitchen, which had come to be known as the "Northwest Passage" (see *FF* 25).

360

To Louise Norcross *spring 1871*

The will is always near, dear, though the feet vary. The terror of the winter has made a little creature of me, who thought myself so bold.

Father was very sick. I presumed he would die, and the sight of his lonesome face all day was harder than personal trouble. He is growing better, though physically reluctantly. I hope I am mistaken, but I think his physical life don't want to live any longer. You know he never played, and the straightest engine has its leaning hour. Vinnie was not here. Now we will turn the corner. All this while I was with you all, much of every hour, wishing we were near enough to assist each other. Would you have felt more at home, to know we were both in extremity? That would be my only regret that I had not told you.

As regards the "pine" and the "jay," it is a long tryst, but I think they are able. I have spoken with them.

Of the "thorn," dear, give it to me, for I am strongest. Never carry what I can carry, for though I think I bend, something straightens me. Go to the "wine-press," dear, and come back and say has the number altered. I descry but one. What I would, I cannot say in so small a place.

Interview is acres, while the broadest letter feels a bandaged place. . . .

Tell Fanny we hold her tight. Tell Loo love is oldest and takes care of us, though just now in a piercing place.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 263–264; *LL* 274–275; *L* (1931) 241–242.

Vinnie was in New York visiting the Hills. Samuel Bowles wrote his son, 24 March 1871 (MS: Bowles): "The elder Dickinson has been quite feeble all winter, a sort of breaking-down with dyspepsia — & it shames him that he is hardly to be recognized in his old character." Louise Norcross has evidently written ED about the distressing condition of Eliza Dudley, with whom she is now staying. Eliza died three months later.

361

To Mrs. Henry Hills *spring 1871*

Dear friend.

To be remembered is next to being loved, and to be loved is Heaven, and is this quite Earth? I have never found it so. Most affectionately thanking you for the care of Vinnie and the delight you have given all in delighting her, especially acknowledging the sweetness done myself, I am the trifling Neighbor, praying you Tonight as always, to come back and dwell. To "Little Emily's" Mama, could name be more familiar than that of a remoter, though scarcely vaster

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Brown. Ink. Unpublished.

Vinnie had just returned from a visit to the Hills in New York. Emily Hills was born 12 September 1870.

362

To Louise Norcross — *mid-July 1871*

I like to thank you, dear, for the annual candy. Though you make no answer, I have no letter from the dead, yet daily love them more. No part of mind is permanent. This startles the happy, but it assists the sad.

This is a mighty morning. I trust that Loo is with it, on hill or pond or wheel. Too few the mornings be, too scant the nights. No lodging can be had for the delights that come to earth to stay, but no apartment find and ride away. Fanny was brave and dear, and helped as much by counsel as by actual team. Whether we missed Loo we will let her guess; riddles are healthful food.

Eliza was not with us, but it was owing to the trains. We know she meant to come.

Oh! Cruel Paradise! We have a chime of bells given for brave Frazer. You'll stop and hear them, won't you?

"We conquered, but Bozzaris fell." That sentence always chokes me.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 265–266; *LL* 279–280; *L* (1931) 243–244.

The bells given in memory of Frazar Stearns were hung on July fourth; commencement took place, 13 July. The Norcross girls were always guests of the Dickinsons, when they could attend commencement, as Fanny did this year. Loo, being unable, had nevertheless sent a box of candy, her "annual" gift, which this letter acknowledges. Eliza Coleman Dudley had died on 3 June; Loo was still in Milwaukee. "Marco Bozzaris," by Fitz-Greene Halleck, was a widely popular ballad, first published in 1825. The line reads: "They conquered – but Bozzaris fell."

363

To Mrs. Lucius Boltwood — *late July 1871*

To thank my dear Mrs Boltwood would be impossible. That is a paltry debt – we are able to pay.

It is sweet to be under obligation to my School Mate's Mother.

I thought the flowers might please him, though he made like Birds, the exchange of Latitudes.

It is proud to believe that his Privilege so far surpasses Ours.

Let me congratulate his Mother.

Tenderly,
Emily

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *Amherst Graduates Magazine,* XXVI (1937) 305; Allen: *Around a Village Green,* pp. 54–55.

Charles Upham Boltwood died, 23 July 1871, aged 34; both George and Henry Boltwood had graduated from Amherst Academy in ED's class in 1847. Charles had been in the Academy, in a much lower class.

364

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *September 1871*

To miss you, Sue, is power.

The stimulus of Loss makes most Possession mean.

To live lasts always, but to love is firmer than to live. No Heart that broke but further went than Immortality.

The Trees keep House for you all Day and the Grass looks chastened.

A silent Hen frequents the place with superstitious Chickens – and still Forenoons a Rooster knocks at your outer Door.

To look that way is Romance. The Novel "out," pathetic worth attaches to the Shelf.

Nothing has gone but Summer, or no one that you knew.

The Forests are at Home – the Mountains intimate at Night and arrogant at Noon, and lonesome Fluency abroad, like suspending Music.

Of so divine a Loss
We enter but the Gain,
Indemnity for Loneliness
That such a Bliss has been.

Tell Neddie that we miss him and cherish "Captain Jinks." Tell Mattie that "Tim's[''] Dog calls Vinnie's Pussy names and I don't dis-

courage him. She must come Home and chase them both and that will make it square.

For Big Mattie and John, of course a strong remembrance.

I trust that you are warm. I keep your faithful place. Whatever throng the Lock is firm upon your Diamond Door.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 184). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 233–234, in part.

Sue was visiting her sister Martha Smith, in Geneva, New York. "Captain Jinks," associated with the horse marines in popular song, was ED's nickname for Ned (see also letter no. 397).

365

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1871*

Trust is better than Contract, for one is still, but the other moves.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 107). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 254.

The date of this and the following brief note to Susan Dickinson is conjectured from the handwriting to be about 1871.

366

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1871*

Has All – a codicil?

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 182). Pencil. Addressed: Sue.

PUBLICATION: *LL* 62.

The occasions or situations which prompted these notes are not known.

367

To Louise and Frances Norcross *early October 1871*

We have the little note and are in part relieved, but have been too alarmed and grieved to hush immediately. The heart keeps sobbing in its sleep. It is the speck that makes the cloud that wrecks the vessel,

children, yet no one fears a speck. I hope what is not lost is saved. Were any angel present, I feel it could not be allowed. So grateful that our little girls are not on fire too. Amherst would have quenched them. Thank you for comforting innocent blamed creatures. We are trying, too. The mayor of Milwaukee cuts and you and Loo sew, don't you? The *New York Times* said so. Sorrow is the "funds" never quite spent, always a little left to be loaned kindly. We have a new cow. I wish I could give Wisconsin a little pail of milk. Dick's Maggie is wilting. Awkward little flower, but transplanting makes it fair. How are the long days that made the fresh afraid?

Brother Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 264–265; *L* (1931) 242.

The great Chicago fire was on 8–9 October 1871, but there were forest fires in Wisconsin that month at exactly the same time, less publicized but involving much greater loss of life. On Maggie Kelley, see letters no. 372 and 375.

368

To T. W. Higginson *November 1871*

I did not read Mr Miller because I could not care about him –

Transport is not urged –

Mrs Hunt's Poems are stronger than any written by Women since Mrs – Browning, with the exception of Mrs Lewes – but truth like Ancestor's Brocades can stand alone – You speak of "Men and Women." That is a broad Book – "Bells and Pomegranates" I never saw but have Mrs Browning's endorsement. While Shakespeare remains Literature is firm –

An Insect cannot run away with Achilles' Head. Thank you for having written the "Atlantic Essays." They are a fine Joy – though to possess the ingredient for Congratulation renders congratulation superfluous.

Dear friend, I trust you as you ask – If I exceed permission, excuse the bleak simplicity that knew no tutor but the North. Would you but guide

Dickinson

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 74). Ink. Envelope addressed: Mr Higginson.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 320, garbled; *LL* 293–294, garbled; *L* (1931) 295.

Four poems are enclosed: "When I hoped I feared," "The Days that we can spare," "Step lightly on this narrow spot," and "Remembrance has a Rear and Front." Joaquin Miller's *Songs of the Sierras* appeared in 1871. Helen Hunt's *Verses* had appeared the year before. Browning is referred to by *Men and Women* (1855) and *Bells and Pomegranates* (1846). Higginson's *Atlantic Essays* was issued in September 1871.

For a note on "Ancestor's Brocades," see letter no. 277.

369

To Mrs. J. G. Holland — *late November 1871*

Dear Sister.

Bereavement to yourself your faith makes secondary. We who cannot hear your voice are chastened indeed—

"Whom he loveth, he punisheth," is a doubtful solace finding tart response in the lower Mind.

I shall cherish the Stripes though I regret that your latest Act must have been a Judicial one. It comforts the Criminal little to know that the Law expires with him.

Beg the Oculist to commute your Sentence that you may also commute mine. Doubtless he has no friend and to curtail Communion is all that remains to him.

This transitive malice will doubtless retire—offering you anew to us and ourselves to you.

I am pleased the Gingerbread triumphed.

Let me know your circumstance through some minor Creature, abler in Machinery if unknown to Love.

Steam has his Commissioner, tho' his substitute is not yet disclosed of God.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 27). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 88–89.

A friend of both Bowles and Holland, Albert D. Briggs of Springfield,

was appointed one of the Massachusetts railroad commissioners on 22 November. The quotation is from Hebrews 12.6: ". . . whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. . ." This letter implies that ED had sent Mrs. Holland her recipe for gingerbread, doubtless the same as that which she supplied Susan Dickinson, who added it to her manuscript cookbook. It follows below.

369a

1 Quart Flour,
½ Cup Butter,
½ Cup Cream,
1 Table Spoon Ginger,
1 Tea Spoon Soda,
1 Salt

Make up with Molasses –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 164). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 230, in part.
The handwriting is the same as that of the preceding letter.

370

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *about 1872*

That so trifling a Creature grieve any I could hardly suppose – though with Love all things are possible.

Thanking you tenderly as a child for a sweet favor I can never go. This will not retard my place in Affection will it?

I shall still be mentioned when the children come?

Some must seem a Traitor, not because it is, but it's Truth belie it.

Andre had not died had he lived Today.

Only Love can wound –

Only Love assist the Wound.

Worthier let us be of this Ample Creature.

If my Crescent fail you, try me in the Moon –

This will make no difference in the daily dearness?

You will keep the same Face and myself no other Heart, with the

slight repairs Thought and Nature make –

In adequate Music there is a Major and a Minor –

Should there not also be a Private?

Good Night – I am going to sleep if the Rat permit me – I hear him singing now to the Tune of a Nut.

I could wish to know, be it by a Trifle, that you name me still.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 28). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *LH* 89–90.
Evidently Mrs. Holland asked ED to pay a visit to Springfield.
The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

371

To T. W. Higginson *mid-March 1872*

Dear friend –

I am sorry your Brother is dead.
I fear he was dear to you.
I should be glad to know you were painlessly grieved –

Of Heaven above the firmest proof
We fundamental know –
Except for it's marauding Hand
It had been Heaven below –

Dickinson

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 75). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 321; *LL* 300; *L* (1931) 296.
Higginson's brother Dr. Francis John Higginson died on 9 March 1872; the notice of his death in the *Springfield Republican* speaks of him as "one of the pioneers in the anti-slavery cause." Higginson has dated the letter "1875," clearly an error as the handwriting reveals. He was probably placing the date later, from memory. His sister Susan Louisa died 27 August 1875.

372

To Louise and Frances Norcross *early May 1872*

Dear Children,

We received the news of your loving kindness through Uncle Joel last evening, and Vinnie is negotiating with neighbor Gray, who goes to a wedding in Boston next week, for the procuring of the nest. Vinnie's views of expressage do not abate with time. The crocuses are with us and several other colored friends. Cousin H[arriet] broke her hip, and is in a polite bed, surrounded by mint juleps. I think she will hate to leave it as badly as *Marian Erle* did. Vinnie says there is a tree in Mr. Sweetser's woods that shivers. I am afraid it is cold. I am going to make it a little coat. I must make several, because it is tall as the barn, and put them on as the circus men stand on each other's shoulders. . . . There is to be a "show" next week, and little Maggie's bed is to be moved to the door so she can see the tents. Folding her own like the Arabs gives her no apprehension. While I write, dear children, the colors Eliza loved quiver on the pastures, and day goes gay to the northwest, innocent as she.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 269; *LL* 280–281; *L* (1931) 246–247.

Harriet Montague broke her hip 28 March 1872. The circus was in town on 14 May. Maggie Kelley lived until July. (See letter no. 375.) "Marian Erle" is a character in Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh*.

373

To Edward (Ned) Dickinson *mid-May 1872?*

Neddie never would believe that Emily was at his Circus, unless she left a fee—

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 52). Pencil. Envelope addressed: Neddie. Unpublished. The impression of a coin still shows in the note. Ned may have had his circus soon after the visiting circus had been in Amherst, 14 May.

374

To Louise Norcross *1872?*

Thank you dear for the passage. How long to live the truth is.

A word is dead, when it is said
Some say—
I say it just begins to live
That day.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed. The text is from *AB* 284.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 269; *LL* 281; *L* (1931) 247; AB 284, where the word "dear" is restored. In *Letters* the text is dated 1872.

375

To Louise and Frances Norcross *27 July 1872*

Little Irish Maggie went to sleep this morning at six o'clock, just the time grandpa rises, and will rest in the grass at Northampton tomorrow. She has had a hard sickness, but her awkward little life is saved and gallant now. Our Maggie is helping her mother put her in the cradle. . . .

Month after this—after that is October, isn't it? That isn't much long. Joy to enfold our little girls in so close a future. That was a lovely letter of Fanny's. It put the cat to playing and the kettle to purring, and two or three birds in plush teams reined nearer to the window. . . . You will miss the nasturtiums, but you will meet the chestnuts. You also will miss the south wind, but I will save the west. . . .

Of course we shall have a telegram that you have left for Nebraska. . . .

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 269–270; *L* (1931) 247.

Margaret Kelley, aged 17, daughter of James and Ellen Kelley, died, 27 July 1872.

376

To Mrs. Henry Hills *1872?*

Will Mrs Hills please break an Ounce Isinglass in a Quart of fresh Milk, placing in boiling Water till quite dissolved, adding afterward four table spoons Chocolate shavings and two of Sugar, boiling together fifteen minutes and straining before turning into molds.

Let me thank my sweet neighbor for her thoughtfulness.

Dickinson

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text is from a transcript made by George Frisbie Whicher of the autograph when it was still in the possession of Mrs. Hills's daughter, Mrs. Susan H. Skillings. He thought it might have been written in 1872. It is in ink, on paper watermarked 1862. Unpublished.

This is a recipe for chocolate dessert.

377

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *late August 1872*

To have lost an Enemy is an Event with all of us – almost more memorable perhaps than to find a friend. This severe success befalls our little Sister – and though the Tears insist at first, as in all good fortune, Gratitude grieves best.

Fortified by Love, a few have prevailed.

"Even so, Father, for so it seemed faithful in thy Sight."

We are proud of her safety – Ashamed of our dismay for her who knew no consternation.

It is the Meek that Valor wear too mighty for the Bold.

We should be glad to know of her present Lifetime, it's project, though a little changed – so precious to us all.

Be secure of this, that whatever waver – her Gibraltar's Heart is firm.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 29). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 91.

Mrs. Holland's eye disease became acute, and necessitated an opera-

tion for the removal of one eye. ED perhaps wrote this letter on reading the report of the operation in the *Springfield Republican* for 29 August 1872. The Hollands were now in New York. The scripture quotation, from Matthew 11. 26, is evidently from memory, for ED substitutes *faithful* for *good.*

378

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *autumn 1872*

My Sue,

Loo and Fanny will come tonight, but need that make a difference? Space is as the Presence –

A narrow Fellow in the Grass
Occasionally rides –
You may have met him? Did you not
His notice instant is –

The Grass divides as with a Comb –
A spotted shaft is seen,
And then it closes at your Feet
And opens farther on –

He likes a Boggy Acre –
A Floor too cool for Corn –
But when a Boy and Barefoot
I more than once at Noon

Have passed I thought a Whip Lash
Unbraiding in the Sun
When stooping to secure it
It wrinkled and was gone –

Several of Nature's People
I know and they know me
I feel for them a transport
Of Cordiality

But never met this Fellow
Attended or alone
Without a tighter Breathing
And Zero at the Bone.

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 193). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 231–232, letter only; *Poems* (1955) 712–713, entire.
The Norcross sisters returned from Milwaukee in the autumn, 1872. Sue appears to have asked for a copy of "The Snake." (See letter no. 316.)

379

To Louise Norcross *late 1872*

. . . How short it takes to go, dear, but afterward to come so many weary years – and yet 'tis done as cool as a general trifle. Affection is like bread, unnoticed till we starve, and then we dream of it, and sing of it, and paint it, when every urchin in the street has more than he can eat. We turn not older with years, but newer every day.

Of all these things we tried to talk, but the time refused us. Longing, it may be, is the gift no other gift supplies. Do you remember what you said the night you came to me? I secure that sentence. If I should see your face no more it will be your portrait, and if I should, more vivid than your mortal face. We must be careful what we say. No bird resumes its egg.

A word left careless on a page
May consecrate an eye,
When folded in perpetual seam
The wrinkled author lie.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 276–277; *LL* 288; *L* (1931) 252.
A worksheet draft of the poem (AC) can be dated about 1872. ED seems to have in mind the visit of the previous autumn.

380

To Louise Norcross *late 1872*

An ill heart, like a body, has its more comfortable days, and then its days of pain, its long relapse, when rallying requires more effort than to dissolve life, and death looks choiceless.

Of Miss P—— I know but this, dear. She wrote me in October, requesting me to aid the world by my chirrup more. Perhaps she stated it as my duty, I don't distinctly remember, and always burn such letters, so I cannot obtain it now. I replied declining. She did not write to me again – she might have been offended, or perhaps is extricating humanity from some hopeless ditch. . . .

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed. The text is from *L* (1894).

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 267; *LL* 281, garbled; *L* (1931) 244–245.

The "ill heart" seems to have been Loo's; she had been very upset by John Dudley's marriage, 23 October, to Marion V. Churchill. The Miss P may be Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. Though only twenty-eight at the time, she was already well known through *Gates Ajar* (1868), an impassioned plea for a wider life for women. She was an editor of *The Woman's Journal*, and Higginson knew her.

381

To T. W. Higginson *late 1872*

To live is so startling, it leaves but little room for other occupations though Friends are if possible an event more fair.

I am happy you have the Travel you so long desire and chastened – that my Master met neither accident nor Death.

Our own Possessions though our own
'Tis well to hoard anew
Remembering the dimensions
Of Possibility.

I often saw your name in illustrious mention and envied an occasion so abstinent to me. Thank you for having been to Amherst. Could you come again that would be far better – though the finest wish is the futile one.

When I saw you last, it was Mighty Summer – Now the Grass is Glass and the Meadow Stucco, and "Still Waters" in the Pool where the Frog drinks.

These Behaviors of the Year hurt almost like Music – shifting when it ease us most. Thank you for the "Lesson."

I will study it though hitherto
Menagerie to me
My Neighbor be.

Your Scholar

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 67). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 316–317; *LL* 277; *L* (1931) 290.

Higginson sailed for Europe in late April, 1872, and returned early in July. His name appeared frequently in the *Springfield Republican* during that time. His penciled date on the letter "1871?" was obviously added later. ED enclosed three poems: "To disappear enhances," "He preached upon Breadth," and "The Sea said 'Come' to the Brook."

382

To Louise and Frances Norcross *winter 1873?*

. . . I know I love my friends – I feel it far in here where neither blue nor black eye goes, and fingers cannot reach. I know 'tis love for them that sets the blister in my throat, many a time a day, when winds go sweeter than their wont, or a different cloud puts my brain from home.

I can not see my soul, but know 'tis there –
Nor ever saw his house, nor furniture –
Who has invited me with him to dwell;
But a confiding guest, consult as well,
What raiment honor him the most,
That I be adequately dressed –
For he insures to none
Lest men specifical adorn –
Procuring him perpetual drest
By dating it a sudden feast.

– Love for the glad if you know them, for the sad if they know you.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 272; *LL* 283; *L* (1931) 248–249.

In *Letters* this is dated "Winter, 1873." Frances Norcross's transcript of the poem and final sentence is in the Bingham collection (AC), and is here reproduced. The dash preceding the final sentence may have been Miss Norcross's way of indicating an omission. She seems also to have omitted the beginning of the letter.

383

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *early 1873?*

Dear Sue –

I would have liked to be beautiful and tidy when you came –

You will excuse me, wont you, I felt so sick. How it would please me if you would come once more, when I was palatable.

Emily

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 153). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 267.

The handwriting places the letter about this time.

384

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *early 1873?*

Sue makes sick Days so sweet, we almost hate our health.

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 122). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 238, with facsimile reproduction.

The handwriting and the tone of the messages suggest that this and the preceding one go together.

385

To Frances Norcross *early 1873*

. . . I was sick, little sister, and write you the first that I am able. The loveliest sermon I ever heard was the disappointment of

Jesus in Judas. It was told like a mortal story of intimate young men. I suppose no surprise we can ever have will be so sick as that. The last "I never knew you" may resemble it. I would your hearts could have rested from the first severity before you received this other one, but "not as I will." I suppose the wild flowers encourage themselves in the dim woods, and the bird that is bruised limps to his house in silence, but we have human natures, and these are different. It is lovely that Mrs. W —— did not disappoint you; not that I thought it possible, but you were so much grieved. . . . A finite life, little sister, is that peculiar garment that were it optional with us we might decline to wear. Tender words to Loo, not most, I trust, in need of them.

Lovingly,

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 276; *LL* 287–288; *L* (1931) 251–252.

Though dated 1874 in *Letters*, this letter, with its reference to Louise, may be part of the sequence following letters no. 380 and 382. Mrs. W has not been identified.

386

To Perez Cowan — *about February 1873*

It is long since I knew of you, Peter, and much may have happened to both, but that is the rarest Book which opened at whatever page, equally enchants us. I hope that you have Power and as much of Peace as in our deep existence may be possible. To multiply the Harbors does not reduce the Sea.

We learn thro' Cousins Montague that you have lost your Sister through that sweeter Loss which we call Gain.

I am glad she is glad.

Her early pain had seemed to me peculiarly cruel.

Tell her how tenderly we are pleased.

Recall me too to your other Sisters, who tho' they may have mislaid me I can always find and include me to your sweet Wife. We are daily reminded of you by the Clergyman, Mr Jenkins, whom you strongly resemble.

Thank you for the Paper –

It is Home-like to know where you are.

We can almost hear you announce the Text, when the Air is clear and how social if you should preach us a note some Sunday in Recess.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Morgan Library. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 333; *LL* 278; *L* (1931) 322–323.

The Amherst Student for February 1873 notes that Cowan is editor of *The Record*, a monthly religious paper published at Knoxville, Tennessee. The handwriting confirms the date.

387

To Louise and Frances Norcross *March 1873?*

. . . I open my window, and it fills the chamber with white dirt. I think God must be dusting; and the wind blows so I expect to read in *The Republican* "Cautionary signals for Amherst," or, "No ships ventured out from Phœnix Row." . . . Life is so rotatory that the wilderness falls to each, sometime. It is safe to remember that. . . .

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 272; *LL* 283; *L* (1931) 249.

The text is dated "March 1873" in *Letters*.

388

To Louise and Frances Norcross *April 1873?*

Sisters,

I hear robins a great way off, and wagons a great way off, and rivers a great way off, and all appear to be hurrying somewhere undisclosed to me. Remoteness is the founder of sweetness; could we see all we hope, or hear the whole we fear told tranquil, like another tale, there would be madness near. Each of us gives or takes heaven in corporeal person, for each of us has the skill of life. I am pleased by your sweet acquaintance. It is not recorded of any rose that it failed of its bee, though obtained in specific instances through scarlet experi-

ence. The career of flowers differs from ours only in inaudibleness. I feel more reverence as I grow for these mute creatures whose suspense or transport may surpass my own. Pussy remembered the judgment, and remained with Vinnie. Maggie preferred her home to "Miggles" and "Oakhurst," so with a few spring touches, nature remains unchanged.

The most triumphant bird
I ever knew or met,
Embarked upon a twig to-day,–
And till dominion set
I perish to behold
So competent a sight–
And sang for nothing scrutable
But impudent delight.
Retired and resumed
His transitive estate;
To what delicious accident
Does finest glory fit!

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 277–278; *LL* 289–290; *L* (1931) 253.

The poem included here was also sent to Mrs. Holland in the early summer of 1873 (see letter no. 391). Though Mrs. Todd dated the letter "Spring, 1874," it may have been written in 1873. Maggie Maher's brother, who had gone as a miner to California in the sixties, had urged Maggie to join him, but she had family cares in Amherst and did not go (see Jay Leyda, "Miss Emily's Maggie," *New World Writing,* May 1953, page 263). Bret Harte's *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Sketches* (1870) contained "Miggles" and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," in which latter story the chief character is the gambler John Oakhurst. It is clearly with a sense of relief that ED concludes her letter, knowing that the faithful Maggie will not have to be replaced.

389

To Louise and Frances Norcross — *late April 1873*

. . . There is that which is called an "awakening" in the church, and I know of no choicer ecstasy than to see Mrs. [Sweetser] roll out

in crape every morning, I suppose to intimidate antichrist; at least it would have that effect on me. It reminds me of Don Quixote demanding the surrender of the wind-mill, and of Sir Stephen Toplift, and of Sir Alexander Cockburn.

Spring is a happiness so beautiful, so unique, so unexpected, that I don't know what to do with my heart. I dare not take it, I dare not leave it – what do you advise?

Life is a spell so exquisite that everything conspires to break it.

"What do I think of *Middlemarch*?" What do I think of glory – except that in a few instances this "mortal has already put on immortality."

George Eliot is one. The mysteries of human nature surpass the "mysteries of redemption," for the infinite we only suppose, while we see the finite. . . . I launch Vinnie on Wednesday; it will require the combined efforts of Maggie, Providence and myself, for whatever advances Vinnie makes in nature and art, she has not reduced departure to a science. . . .

Your loving

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 279; *L* (1931) 254.

There were evangelical meetings in Amherst during the week of 22 April 1873. A card (HCL) written and signed by Edward Dickinson is dated 1 May, and says: "I hereby give myself to God." Vinnie made her visit, here spoken about, to the Hollands, now living in New York; she probably left Amherst in May. For an earlier description of Mrs. Luke Sweetser, written in similar vein, see letter no. 339. Sir Alexander Cockburn (1802–1880), the lord chief justice of England from 1859 until his death, is here alluded to as the epitome of awesome sedateness. Sir Stephen Toplift has not been identified. Since no person of that name is known, he presumably is a somewhat modish character from fiction, familiar to ED and the Norcrosses. The quotation used to characterize *Middlemarch* is adapted from 1 Corinthians 15.53: ". . . and this mortal must put on immortality." The final quotation may be ED's attempt to recall Matthew 13.11: "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

390

To Frances Norcross *late May 1873*

Thank you, dear, for the love. I am progressing timidly. Experiment has a stimulus which withers its fear.

> This is the place they hoped before,
> Where I am hoping now.
> The seed of disappointment grew
> Within a capsule gay,
> Too distant to arrest the feet
> That walk this plank of balm –
> Before them lies escapeless sea –
> The way is closed they came.

Since you so gently ask, I have had but one serious adventure – getting a nail in my foot, but Maggie pulled it out. It only kept me awake one night, and the birds insisted on sitting up, so it became an occasion instead of a misfortune. There was a circus, too, and I watched it away at half-past three that morning. They said "hoy, hoy" to their horses.

Glad you heard Rubinstein. Grieved Loo could not hear him. He makes me think of polar nights Captain Hall could tell! Going from ice to ice! What an exchange of awe!

I am troubled for Loo's eye. Poor little girl! Can I help her? She has so many times saved me. Do take her to Arlington Street. Xerxes must go now and see to her worlds. You shall "taste," dear.

Lovingly.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 270–271; *LL* 282; *L* (1931) 248.

The Arctic explorer Captain Charles F. Hall died in Greenland in 1871. The rescue of his party was reported in the papers, 10–15 May 1873. The circus came to Amherst this year on 20 May. Anton Rubinstein had played in Boston during April.

391

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *early summer 1873*

I was thinking of thanking you for the kindness to Vinnie.

She has no Father and Mother but me and I have no Parents but her.

She has been very happy and returns with her Sentiments at rest.

Enclosed please find my gratitude.

You remember the imperceptible has no external Face.

Vinnie says you are most illustrious and dwell in Paradise. I have never believed the latter to be a superhuman site.

Eden, always eligible, is peculiarly so this noon. It would please you to see how intimate the Meadows are with the Sun. Besides—

> The most triumphant Bird I ever knew or met
> Embarked upon a twig today
> And till Dominion set
> I famish to behold so eminent a sight
> And sang for nothing scrutable
> But intimate Delight.
> Retired, and resumed his transitive Estate—
> To what delicious Accident
> Does finest Glory fit!

While the Clergyman tells Father and Vinnie that "this Corruptible shall put on Incorruption"—it has already done so and they go defrauded.

Emily—

MANUSCRIPT: Holland. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 92–93.

Written after Vinnie's return from her visit. The poem had been sent to the Norcrosses earlier. (See letter no. 388.) The scripture quotation is from 1 Corinthians 15.42.

392

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *August 1873*

Sister

Our parting was somewhat interspersed and I cannot conclude which went. I shall be cautious not to so as to miss no one.

Vinnie drank your Coffee and has looked a little like you since, which is nearly a comfort.

Austin has had two calls and is very tired – One from Professor Tyler, and the other from Father. I am afraid they will call here.

Bun has run away –

Disaffection – doubtless – as to the Supplies. Ned is a better Quarter Master than his vagrant Papa.

The little Turkey is lonely and the Chickens bring him to call. His foreign Neck in familiar Grass is quaint as a Dromedary. I suppose the Wind has chastened the Bows on Mattie's impudent Hat and the Sea presumed as far as he dare on her stratified Stockings.

If her Basket wont hold the Boulders she picks, I will send a Bin.

Ned is much lamented and his Circus Airs in the Rowen will be doubly sweet.

Bela Dickinson's son is the only Basso remaining. It rains every pleasant Day now and Dickens' Maggie's Lawn will be green as a Courtier's.

Love for your Brother and Sister – please – and the dear Lords.

Nature gives her love –

Twilight touches Amherst with his yellow Glove.

Miss me sometimes, dear – Not on most occasions, but the Seldoms of the Mind.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 150). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *LL* 63, ending only; *FF* 234–235, in part.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. Susan took the children to Swampscott in the summer of 1873, where they visited as guests of one of her brothers.

393

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *summer 1873*

Part to whom Sue is precious gave her a note Wednesday, but as Father omitted the "Ocean House" presume it is still groping in the Swampscott Mail –

We remind her we love her – Unimportant fact, though Dante did'nt think so, nor Swift, nor Mirabeau.

Could Pathos compete with that simple statement
"Not that we loved him but that he loved us"?

Emily–

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 95). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *AM* CXV (1915) 37, in part; *FF* 235, in part.

This letter may shortly have followed the preceding. The hyperbole of the second paragraph alludes to the great loves of Dante, Swift, and Mirabeau – respectively Beatrice, Stella, and Sophie de Ruffey. The quotation is from 1 John 4.10: ". . . not that we loved God, but that he loved us."

394

To Louise and Frances Norcross *September 1873*

Little Sisters,

I wish you were with me, not precisely here, but in those sweet mansions the mind likes to suppose. Do they exist or nay? We believe they may, but do they, how know we? "The light that never was on sea or land" might just as soon be had for the knocking.

Fanny's rustic note was as sweet as fern; Loo's token also tenderly estimated. Maggie and I are fighting which shall give Loo the "plant," though it is quite a pleasant war. . . . Austin went this morning, after a happy egg and toast provided by Maggie, whom he promised to leave his sole heir.

The "pussum" is found. "Two dollars reward" would return John Franklin. . . .

Love for Aunt Olivia. Tell her I think to instruct flowers will be her labor in heaven. . . .

Nearly October, sisters! No one can keep a sumach and keep a secret too. That was my "pipe" Fanny found in the woods.

Affectionately,
Modoc.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 261; *LL* 272–273; *L* (1931) 239–240.

The Modoc Indians in Oregon at this time were resisting the efforts of the government to place them on a reservation. The Arctic explorer Sir

John Franklin was lost in 1847. Mrs. Alfred Norcross was "Aunt Olivia." The quoted line in the first paragraph is from Wordsworth's *Elegiac Stanzas* (see letter no. 315).

395

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *about September 1873*

Owning but little Stock in the "Gold of Ophir" I am not subject to large Reverses – though may not the small prove irreparable? I have lost a Sister. Her name was not Austin and it was not Vinnie. She was scant of stature though expansive spirited and last seen in November – Not the November heretofore, but Heretofore's Father.

Trite is that Affliction which is sanctified. "I have chosen whom I have chosen."

Possibly she perished?

Extinction is eligible.

Science will not trust us with another World.

Guess I and the Bible will move to some old fashioned spot where we'll feel at Home.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 31). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 94.

The opening sentence alludes probably to the panic of 1873, when half the railroads in the country were in receivership. The depression began in September (see letter no. 401).

396

To T. W. Higginson *about 1873*

Could you teach me now?

Will you instruct me then no more?

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 92a and 90). Respectively pencil and ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 291.

These are two separate notes, the first a card, the second a sheet of

stationery. They seem to have been written about the same time, and with one three poems were evidently enclosed: "Not any higher stands the Grave," "Longing is like the Seed," and "Dominion lasts until obtained." It is possible that the poems went with the first, that she had no response from Higginson, so wrote the second.

397

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *autumn 1873*

Without the annual parting I thought to shun the Loneliness that parting ratifies. How artfully in vain!

Your Coffee cooled untouched except by random Fly.

A one armed Man conveyed the flowers. Not all my modest schemes have so perverse a close.

My love to "Captain Jenks" who forbore to call.

If not too uncongenial to the Divine Will, a kiss also for Mattie.

"God is a jealous God."

I miss the Turkey's quaint face – once my grave Familiar, also the former Chickens, now forgotten Hens. "Pussum" cries I hear, but it is too select a grief to accept solace. Tell Mattie Tabby caught a Rat and it ran away. Grandpa caught it and it stayed.

He is the best Mouser.

The Rabbit winks at me all Day, but if I wink back, he shuffles a Clover.

What Rowen he leaves, Horace will pick for the Cow.

This is the final Weather. The transport that is not postponed is is [*sic*] stopping with us all.

But Subjects hinder talk.

Silence is all we dread.
There's Ransom in a Voice –
But Silence is Infinity.
Himself have not a face.

Love for John and Mattie.

Sister.

Manuscript: HCL (B 123). Ink.
Publication: *FF* 232–233.
Sue took the children with her on her annual autumn visit to her sister

Martha Smith at Geneva, New York. For "Captain Jenks" ("Jinks"), see letter no. 364. The sixth paragraph is a paraphrase of "I thy God am a jealous God," which appears in Exodus 20.5, and elsewhere.

398

To Edward (Ned) Dickinson *autumn 1873*

Ned – Bird –

It was good to hear you. Not a voice in the Woods is so dear as your's.

Papa is living with me.

He is a gentle Passenger.

It will be an excellent Day when you and Mattie come. The Robins have all gone but a few infirm ones and the Cricket and I keep House for the Frost. He is very tidy.

You must excuse "the Lake." I dont think he meant to be "rough."

You and I should get tired of bowing all Day, in a Silver Pen.

I am pleased with your "Store." If you sell your Goods at Isaiah's price, I will take them all. Hope Mama is refreshed and refreshing Aunt Mattie. Did you know Mama was a precious Inn, where the Fair stopped?

I have borrowed a little Honey for Aunt Mattie's Cold of a religious Bee, who can be relied on. Sometime, when you are intimate, you can let her know.

I am saving a Miller for Mattie.

It laid six eggs on the Window Sill and I thought it was getting tired, so I killed it for her.

Good Night, Little Brother. I would love to stay.

Vinnie and Grandma and Grandpa and Maggie give their love.

Pussy, her striped Respects.

Ned's most little Aunt.

Emily.

Manuscript: HCL (B 121). Ink.

Publication: *LL* 58, in part; *FF* 236, in part.

This letter follows the letter preceding. The allusion to Isaiah may be to chapter 55, where great blessings are offered freely to those who wish to receive them.

399

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *autumn 1873*

Little Sister.

I miss your childlike Voice –

I miss your Heroism.

I feel that I lose combinedly a Soldier and a Bird.

I trust that you experience a trifling destitution.

Thank you for having been.

These timid Elixirs are obtained too seldom.

Thank you for every Patience. You won the love of all, even a sweet remark from Austin, in itself an achievement.

I am glad "the Jessamine lived."

To live is Endowment. It puts me in mind of that singular Verse in the Revelations – "Every several Gate was of one Pearl."

Little Sister – Good Night – I am sure you went.

Parting is one of the exactions of a Mortal Life. It is bleak – like Dying, but occurs more times.

To escape the former, some invite the last. The Giant in the Human Heart was never met outside.

The Sun came out when you were gone.

I chid him for delay –

He said we had not needed him. Oh prying Sun!

Love for Doctor.

Emily.

Manuscript: HCL (H 32). Ink.
Publication: *LH* 95.
Mrs. Holland had visited in Amherst during the autumn.

400

To Louise and Frances Norcross *1873?*

. . . I think of your little parlor as the poets once thought of Windermere, – peace, sunshine, and books.

There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away,
Nor any coursers like a page
Of prancing poetry.
This traverse may the poorest take,
Without oppress of toll;
How frugal is the chariot
That bears the human soul!

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 273; *L* (1931) 249, where it is dated "Autumn, 1873."

Windermere, the largest lake in England (in the Lake District), has had literary association since the time of Wordsworth.

401

To Louise and Frances Norcross *November 1873*

Dear Berkeleys,

I should feel it my duty to lay my "net" on the national altar, would it appease finance, but as Jay Cooke can't wear it, I suppose it won't. I believe he opened the scare. M[attie] says D[id] pulled her hair, and D[id] says M[attie] pulled her hair, but the issue at court will be, which pulled the preliminary hair. I am not yet "thrown out of employment," nor ever receiving "wages" find them materially "reduced," though when bread may be a "tradition" Mr. C[hurch] alone knows. I am deeply indebted to Fanny, also to her sweet sister *Mrs. Ladislaw*; add the funds to the funds, please. Keep the cap till I send – I could not insult my country by incurring expressage now. . . . Buff sings like a nankeen bumble-bee, and a bird's nest on the syringa is just in a line with the conservatory fence, so I have fitted a geranium to it and the effect is deceitful.

I see by the paper that father spends the winter with you. Will you be glad to see him? . . . Tell Loo when I was a baby father used to take me to mill for my health. I was then in consumption! While he obtained the "grist," the horse looked round at me, as if to say "'eye hath not seen or ear heard the things that' I would do to you if I weren't tied!" That is the way I feel toward her. . . .

Maggie will write soon, says it was Mount Holyoke, and not sweetbrier she gave you! Thanks for the little "news." Did get Fanny's note and thank it. Have thousands of things to say as also ten thousands, but must abate now.

Lovingly,

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 274–275; *LL* 286, in small part; *L* (1931) 250.

The Norcross sisters lived in Boston at the Hotel Berkeley from February 1873 until April 1874. Edward Dickinson was elected a representative to the Massachusetts legislature on 5 November. Jay Cooke (1821–1905), a Philadelphia banker, was principal financial agent for the Federal Government during the Civil War. His house suspended business, 18 September 1873, having overextended credit in building the Northern Pacific Railroad, and thus precipitated one of the worst financial panics in United States history. *Middlemarch*, by George Eliot, had recently been published (1872), and all had evidently been reading it. Loo is here identified with the heroine, the unhappy Dorothea Casaubon, who in the end marries Will Ladislaw. "Did" was the nickname of Martha Dickinson's friend Sally Jenkins. The Dickinson's gardener, Horace Church, was regarded as a village "tradition" (see letter no. 692). The scripture paraphrase is from 1 Corinthians 2.9.

402

To F. B. Sanborn *about 1873*

Thank you, Mr Sanborn. I am glad there are Books.

They are better than Heaven for that is unavoidable while one may miss these.

Had I a trait you would accept I should be most proud, though he has had his Future who has found Shakespeare –

E – Dickinson

MANUSCRIPT: Barrett. Ink. Unpublished.

This is the only letter ED is known to have written Franklin Benjamin Sanborn, whose editorial association with the *Springfield Republican* would account for the acquaintance, however slight. She may have written him to inquire about some new book in which she was interested. As correspondent for the paper, Sanborn wrote one column dealing with literary topics, another dealing with national politics.

The last sentence may be an allusion to her own writing.

403

To Martha Dickinson *30 November 1873?*

Dear Mattie,

I am glad it is your Birthday –

It is this little Bouquet's Birthday too –

It's Father is a very old Man by the name of Nature, whom you never saw –

I am going away to live in a Tippet that a South Down built me, so I cant say any more –

Be sure to live in vain and never mingle with the mouse – like Papa's Tongs –

Aunt Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 15). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *AM* CXV (1915) 37, in part; *LL* 58, in part.
Mattie was born, 30 November 1866.

404

To Mrs. Hanson L. Read *28 December 1873*

Vinnie says your martyrs were fond of flowers.
Would these profane their vase?

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text is from *L* (1931).
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 375; *L* (1931) 365.
The two Read sons, in their late teens, were drowned, 26 December 1873, while skating on Adams Pond.

405

To T. W. Higginson *January 1874*

Thank you, dear friend, for my "New Year;" but did you not confer it? Had your scholar permission to fashion your's, it were perhaps too fair. I always ran Home to Awe when a child, if anything befell me.

He was an awful Mother, but I liked him better than none. There remained this shelter after you left me the other Day.

Of your flitting Coming it is fair to think.

Like the Bee's Coupe – vanishing in Music.

Would you with the Bee return, what a Firm of Noon!

Death obtains the Rose, but the News of Dying goes no further than the Breeze. The Ear is the last Face.

We hear after we see.

Which to tell you first is still my Dismay.

Meeting a Bird this Morning, I begun to flee. He saw it and sung.

Presuming on that lone result
His infinite Disdain
But vanquished him with my Defeat –
'Twas Victory was slain.

I shall read the Book.

Thank you for telling me.

"Field Lilies" are Cleopatra's "Posies."

I was re-reading "Oldport."

Largest last, like Nature.

Was it you that came?

A Wind that woke a lone Delight
Like Separation's Swell –
Restored in Arctic confidence
To the Invisible.

Your Scholar –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 84). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 325–326, in part; *LL* 304–305, in part; *L* (1931) 306–307, entire. One prose passage is printed as verse.

Higginson's volume of sketches, *Oldport Days*, had been published in 1873. With this letter ED enclosed one poem: "Because that you are going." On 3 December 1873 Higginson had been invited to lecture at Amherst. While there, he called on ED for the second (and last) time, though the occasion was not significant enough for him to make record of the fact in his diary (HCL). After his return to Newport he wrote a letter (HCL) to his sisters on 9 December:

> . . . the boys are numerous & hearty & better taken care of physically than at Harvard – all being *obliged* to exercise in gymnasium. I saw my eccentric poetess Miss Emily Dickinson who *never* goes out-

side her father's grounds & sees only me & a few others. She says, "there is always one thing to be grateful for – that one is one's self & not somebody else" but [my wife] Mary thinks this is singularly out of place in E.D.'s case. She (E.D.) glided in, in white, bearing a Daphne odora for me, & said under her breath "How long are you going to stay." I'm afraid Mary's other remark "Oh why do the insane so cling to you?" still holds. I will read you some of her poems when you come.

Apparently it was Higginson, however, who picked up the correspondence, for ED's letter above is a reply to one (HCL) which he wrote to her, dated Newport, Rhode Island, 31 December 1873. One gathers from it that ED had recently sent or given him a copy of her poem beginning "The Wind begun to rock and Grass," a copy, now lost, which Higginson told Mrs. Todd in May 1891 that he had in his possession (*AB* 129). Since ED clearly had not written Higginson after his call, one conjectures that she presented the poem to him during his visit, and that the acknowledgment is made in the following letter.

405a

Dear friend

This note shall go as a New Year's gift & assure you that you are not forgotten. I am glad to remember my visit to Amherst, & especially the time spent with you. It seemed to give you some happiness, and I hope it did; – certainly I enjoyed being with you. Each time we seem to come together as old & tried friends; and I certainly feel that I have known you long & well, through the beautiful thoughts and words you have sent me. I hope you will not cease to trust me and turn to me; and I will try to speak the truth to you, and with love.

Today is perfectly beautiful, all snow & azure – our snow is apt to be dingy, but today the Amherst hills can hardly be whiter. Such days ought to give us strength to go by all the storms & eclipses unmoved. Your poem about the storm is fine – it gives the sudden transitions. While there is anything so sudden in the world as lightning, no event among men can seem anything but slow.

I wish you could see some field lilies, yellow & scarlet, painted in water colors that are just sent to us for Christmas. These are not your favorite colors, & perhaps I love the azure & gold myself – but perhaps

we should learn to love & cultivate these ruddy hues of life. Do you remember Mrs. Julia Howe's poem "I stake my life upon the red."

Pray read the enlarged edition of Verses by H.H. – the new poems are so beautiful. She is in Colorado this winter, & enjoys the out-door climate.

I always am glad to hear from you, and hope that your New Year may be very happy.

Your friend
T. W. Higginson

406

To Mrs. Edward Tuckerman *January 1874?*

Dear Friend,

I fear my congratulation, like repentance according to Calvin, is too late to be plausible, but might there not be an exception, were the delight or the penitence found to be durable?

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 379–380; *LL* 286; *L* (1931) 370.

Dated in *Letters*: January, 1874. Mrs. Tuckerman is known to have supplied the dates in letters to her from ED. The occasion that prompted this letter has not been identified.

407

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1874*

Dear Sue –

It is sweet you are better –

I am greedy to see you. Your Note was like the Wind. The Bible chooses that you know to define the Spirit.

A Wind that rose though not a Leaf
In any Forest stirred,
But with itself did cold engage
Beyond the realm of Bird.

A Wind that woke a lone Delight
Like Separation's Swell –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 190). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 256–257.

The third and final page of the letter, extant when it was published in 1932, is now missing. As printed, the lines read:

Restored in Arctic confidence
To the invisible.

The same quatrain (the second stanza) is in the letter to Higginson (no. 405) written in January. The letters appear to have been written about the same time.

408

To Mrs. Joseph A. Sweetser — *late January 1874*

Saying nothing, My Aunt Katie, sometimes says the Most.

Death's Waylaying not the sharpest
Of the thefts of Time –
There Marauds a sorer Robber,
Silence – is his name –
No Assault, nor any Menace
Doth betoken him.
But from Life's consummate Cluster –
He supplants the Balm.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text is from a transcript of the autograph made when it was on exhibit at the Jones Library in 1935.

PUBLICATION: Kate Dickinson Sweetser, *Great American Girls* (1931) 135; *Poems* (1955) 899.

Joseph Sweetser walked out of his New York apartment on the evening of 21 January 1874, and was never subsequently traced. Many papers carried the account. The *Springfield Republican* noted it on 29 January.

409

To Louise and Frances Norcross — *late February 1874*

Dear Children,

Father is ill at home. I think it is the "Legislature" reacting on an otherwise obliging constitution. Maggie is ill at Tom's – a combina-

tion of cold and superstition of fever – of which her enemy is ill – and longing for the promised land, of which there is no surplus. "Apollyon" and the "Devil" fade in martial lustre beside Lavinia and myself. "As thy day is so shall thy" stem "be." We can all of us sympathize with the man who wanted the roan horse to ride to execution, because he said 'twas a nimble hue, and 'twould be over sooner. . . .

Dear Loo, shall I enclose the slips, or delay till father? Vinnie advises the latter. I usually prefer formers, latters seeming to me like Dickens's hero's dead mamma, "too some weeks off" to risk. Do you remember the "sometimes" of childhood, which invariably never occurred? . . .

Be pleased you have no cat to detain from justice. Ours have taken meats, and the wife of the "general court" is trying to lay them out, but as she has but two wheels and they have four, I would accept their chances. Kitties eat kindlings now. Vinnie thinks they are "cribbers." I wish I could make you as long a call as De Quincey made North, but that morning cannot be advanced.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 275–276; *LL* 286–287; *L* (1931) 250–251, dated: 1874.

Edward Dickinson's notation on an almanac for 1874 (AC) indicates that he was at home in late February and early March of this year. De Quincey's call on Christopher North is related by North's daughter, Mary Wilson Gordon, *Memoir of John Wilson* (Christopher North), 1862, 327:

> I remember his [De Quincey's] coming to Gloucester Place one stormy night. He remained hour after hour, in vain expectation that the waters would assuage and the hurly-burly cease. There was nothing for it but that our visitor should remain all night. The Professor [Wilson] ordered a room to be prepared for him, and they found each other such good company that this accidental detention was prolonged, without further difficulty, for the greater part of *a year*.

ED's interest in De Quincey, who died in 1859, began evidently in 1858 (see letter no. 191). The scripture paraphrase is from Deuteronomy 33. 25: ". . . as thy days, so shall thy strength be."

410

To Louise and Frances Norcross *early March 1874*

Thank you, own little girls, for the sweet remembrance – sweet specifically. Be sure it was pondered with loving thoughts not unmixed with palates.

But love, like literature, is "its exceeding great reward." . . . I am glad you heard "Little Em'ly." I would go far to hear her, except I have lost the run of the roads. . . . Infinite March is here, and I "hered" a bluebird. Of course I am standing on my head!

Go slow, my soul, to feed thyself
Upon his rare approach.
Go rapid, lest competing death
Prevail upon the coach.
Go timid, should his testing eye
Determine thee amiss,
Go boldly, for thou paidst the price,
Redemption for a kiss.

Tabby is singing *Old Hundred*, which, by the way, is her maiden name. Would they address and mail the note to their friend J—— W——?

Tidings of a book.

Emily.

Manuscript: missing.

Publication: *L* (1894) 265; *LL* 278–279; *L* (1931) 243.

The play "Little Em'ly," based on *David Copperfield*, was at the Boston Museum for six weeks from 5 January to 16 February 1874. The identity of J. W. is not known.

411

To Mrs. Jonathan L. Jenkins *March 1874*

Dear friend

I am picking you a flower for remembering Sumner – He was his Country's – She – is Time's –

When Continents expire
The Giants they discarded – are
Promoted to Endure –

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 43). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *FN* 124.
Charles Sumner died, 11 March 1874.

412

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *May 1874*

Little Sister.

I hope you are safe and distinguished. Is the latter the former? Experience makes me no reply.

Nature begins to work and I am assisting her a little, when I can be spared.

It is pleasant to work for so noble a Person.

Vinnie and "Pat" are abetting the Farm in Papa's absence. A Triumph of Schemes, if not of Executions. Pat is as abnegating as a Dromedary and I fear will find his Lot as unique.

When you were here – there were Flowers and there are Flowers now, but those were the Nosegays of Twilight and these – are the Nosegays of Dawn –

It is plain that some one has been asleep!

Suffer Rip – Van Winkle!

Vinnie says Maggie is "Cleaning House." I should not have suspected it, but the Bible directs that the "Left Hand" circumvent the Right!

We are to have another "Circus," and again the Procession from Algiers will pass the Chamber-Window.

The Minor Toys of the Year are alike, but the Major – are different.

But the dimensions of each subject admonish me to leave it.

Love, though, for your own. When a Child and fleeing from Sacra-

ment I could hear the Clergyman saying "All who loved the Lord Jesus Christ – were asked to remain –"

My flight kept time to the Words.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 33). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 97.

In 1874 Maginley's Circus came to town on 23 May. For an expression similar to that in the next to last paragraph, see letter no. 926.

413

To T. W. Higginson *late May 1874*

I thought that being a Poem one's self precluded the writing Poems, but perceive the Mistake. It seemed like going Home, to see your beautiful thought once more, now so long forbade it – Is it Intellect that the Patriot means when he speaks of his "Native Land"? I should have feared to "quote" to you what you "most valued."

You have experienced sanctity.

It is to me untried.

Of Life to own –
From Life to draw –
But never touch the Reservoir –

You kindly ask for my Blossoms and Books – I have read but a little recently – Existence has overpowered Books. Today, I slew a Mushroom –

I felt as if the Grass was pleased
To have it intermit.
This Surreptitious Scion
Of Summer's circumspect.

The broadest words are so narrow we can easily cross them – but there is water deeper than those which has no Bridge. My Brother and Sisters would love to see you. Twice, you have gone – Master –

Would you but once come –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 88). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 304–305.

Higginson's poem "Decoration," appropriate to Memorial Day, appeared in the June issue of *Scribner's Monthly*.

414

To Louise and Frances Norcross *summer 1874*

You might not remember me, dears. I cannot recall myself. I thought I was strongly built, but this stronger has undermined me.

We were eating our supper the fifteenth of June, and Austin came in. He had a despatch in his hand, and I saw by his face we were all lost, though I didn't know how. He said that father was very sick, and he and Vinnie must go. The train had already gone. While horses were dressing, news came he was dead.

Father does not live with us now – he lives in a new house. Though it was built in an hour it is better than this. He hasn't any garden because he moved after gardens were made, so we take him the best flowers, and if we only knew he knew, perhaps we could stop crying. . . . The grass begins after Pat has stopped it.

I cannot write any more, dears. Though it is many nights, my mind never comes home. Thank you each for the love, though I could not notice it. Almost the last tune that he heard was, "Rest from thy loved employ."

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 280; *LL* 290–291; *L* (1931) 255.

Edward Dickinson died on 16 (not 15) June. ED concludes her letter by recalling the James Montgomery hymn (which she had evidently played for her father):

> Servant of God, well done!
> Rest from thy loved employ.
> The battle fought, the victory won,
> Enter thy Master's joy!

415

To Samuel Bowles *late June 1874*

I should think you would have few Letters for your own are so noble that they make men afraid – and sweet as your Approbation is – it is had in fear – lest your depth convict us.

You compel us each to remember that when Water ceases to rise – it has commenced falling. That is the law of Flood. The last Day that I saw you was the newest and oldest of my life.

Resurrection can come but once – first – to the same House. Thank you for leading us by it.

Come always, dear friend, but refrain from going. You spoke of not liking to be forgotten. Could you, tho' you would? Treason never knew you.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 220; *LL* 271; *L* (1931) 206.

The Bowleses had been with the Dickinson family at the time of the funeral of Edward Dickinson. Bowles sailed for Europe in mid-July.

416

To Mrs. James S. Cooper *June 1874*

Though a stranger, I am unwilling not to thank you personally for the delicate attention to my Family.

For the comprehension of Suffering One must ones Self have Suffered.

E. Dickinson

MANUSCRIPT: Sheldon. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 391; *L* (1931) 380.

This and the note that follows are messages written to neighbors after Edward Dickinson's death.

417

To Mrs. Henry Hills *summer 1874*

Dear friend,

I believe that the sweetest thanks are inaudible. They occur in the Heart and no other knows them. But as two or three awkward Tears supersede Orations, I will say no more.

Flowers are not quite earthly. They are like the Saints. We should

doubtless feel more at Home with them than with the Saints of God.

Were the "Great Crowd of Witnesses" chiefly Roses and Pansies, there would be less to apprehend, though let me not presume upon Jehovah's Program.

Thank Mr. Hills for the lovely message.

Please tell the Children the Acorns sell me Saucers still for the little Pies, but I have lent my only Wing to a lame Robin, so cannot freight them. Children's Hearts are large.

I shall not need an Intercessor.

Vinnie gives her love, and will write.

Emily

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text has the same provenance as that of letter no. 376. The paper is watermarked 1871. Unpublished.

418

To T. W. Higginson *July 1874*

The last Afternoon that my Father lived, though with no premonition – I preferred to be with him, and invented an absence for Mother, Vinnie being asleep. He seemed peculiarly pleased as I oftenest stayed with myself, and remarked as the Afternoon withdrew, he "would like it to not end."

His pleasure almost embarrassed me and my Brother coming – I suggested they walk. Next morning I woke him for the train – and saw him no more.

His Heart was pure and terrible and I think no other like it exists.

I am glad there is Immortality – but would have tested it myself – before entrusting him.

Mr Bowles was with us – With that exception I saw none. I have wished for you, since my Father died, and had you an Hour unengrossed, it would be almost priceless. Thank you for each kindness.

My Brother and Sister thank you for remembering them.

Your beautiful Hymn, was it not prophetic? It has assisted that Pause of Space which I call "Father" –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 68). Ink. Endorsed by TWH: July 1874 Her father's death.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (October 1891) 455, in part; *L* (1894) 317–318; *LL* 291–292; *L* (1931) 291–292.

In her final paragraph ED again alludes to Higginson's poem "Decoration" (see letter no. 413).

419

To Mrs. James S. Cooper — *late summer 1874*

Dear friend –

It was my first impulse to take them to my Father – whom I cannot resist the grief to expect.

Thank you.

Vinnie's Sister –

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 391; *LL* 295; *L* (1931) 381.

420

To Samuel Bowles — *about October 1874*

Dear friend.

The Paper wanders so I cannot write my name on it, so I give you Father's Portrait instead.

As Summer into Autumn slips
And yet we sooner say
"The Summer" then "the Autumn," lest
We turn the sun away,

And almost count it an Affront
The presence to concede
Of one however lovely, not
The one that we have loved –

So we evade the charge of Years
On one attempting shy
The Circumvention of the Shaft
Of Life's Declivity.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 222; *LL* 285; *L* (1931) 208; *Poems* (1955) 929–930.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. Bowles called on the Dickinsons on 4 October 1874, and the tone of the letter suggests that it was written shortly thereafter.

421

To Emily Fowler Ford *about 1874*

Should it be possible for me to speak of My Father before I behold him, I shall try to do so to you, whom he always remembered –

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 392; *LL* 296; *L* (1931) 381.

This message probably acknowledges a note of condolence from Emily Ford, written after the death of Edward Dickinson.

422

To Mrs. Jonathan L. Jenkins *1874*

The Absence of the big Brother is a Temptation to shield the little Sister, were she not of herself a sufficing one –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 42). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *FN* 83, somewhat altered.

Mr. Jenkins made a carriage trip to the White Mountains early in September 1874.

423

To Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan L. Jenkins *about 1874*

For my Mr. and Mrs Clergyman, with confiding love –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 45). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *FN* 85.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

424

To Mrs. William A. Stearns *autumn 1874?*

Will the dear ones who eased the grieved days spurn the fading orchard?

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 376; *L* (1931) 366.
The note probably was sent with fruit. The date is that given in *Letters.*

425

To Clara Newman Turner *December 1874*

I am sure you must have remembered that Father had "Become as Little Children," or you would never have dared send him a Christmas gift, for you know how he frowned upon Santa Claus – and all such prowling gentlemen –

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 372; *LL* 294; *L* (1931) 362.
The text is from a transcript (AC) given to Mrs. Todd by Mrs. Turner, who states in her reminiscences (HCL) that the letter was sent to her in thanks for a Christmas wreath for Edward Dickinson's grave. The quotation is from Matthew 18.3.

426

To Mrs. Hanson L. Read *26 December 1874?*

My dear Mrs. Read,

We have often thought of you today, and almost spoken with you, but thought you might like to be alone – if one can be alone with so thronged a Heaven.

E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 375–376; *LL* 377; *L* (1931) 366.
This was probably sent on the anniversary of the death of the two boys by drowning (see letter no. 404).

427

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1874*

Trifles – like Life – and the Sun, we Acknowledge in Church, but the Love that demeans them, having no Confederate, dies without a Term.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 99). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 247.
This and the following four messages sent to Sue can be dated only by handwriting, and they appear to have been written about 1874.

428

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1874*

Never mind dear.
Trial as a Stimulus far exceeds Wine though it would hardly be prohibited as a Beverage.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 38). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *LL* 87.

429

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1874*

To lose what we never owned might seem an eccentric Bereavement but Presumption has it's Affliction as actually as Claim –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 6). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *LL* 62.

430

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1874*

"Egypt – thou knew'st" –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 25). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 237
Antony and Cleopatra, III, xi, 56–61 (Antony):

> Egypt, thou knew'st too well,
> My heart was to thy rudder tied by the strings,
> And thou shouldst tow me after. O'er my spirit
> Thy full supremacy thou knew'st, and that
> Thy beck might from the bidding of the gods
> Command me.

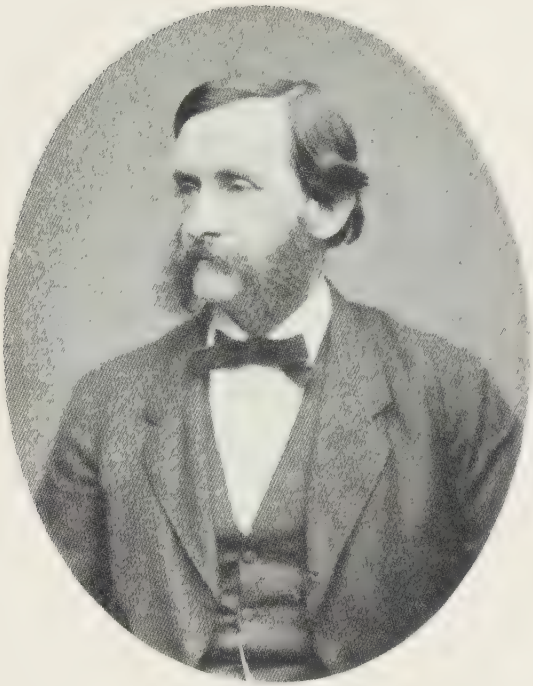
431

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1874*

May I do nothing for my dear Sue?

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 26). Pencil. Unpublished.



Thomas Wentworth Higginson



Helen Hunt Jackson



The Reverend Jonathan L. Jenkins



Samuel Bowles



Samuel Bowles — with friends in California

X

LETTERS

432–626

[1875–1879]

Nature is a Haunted House –
but Art – a House that tries to be haunted.

[1875–1879]

During the final decade of her life Emily Dickinson's withdrawal from outside association became nearly absolute. She chose now communication through the medium of letters, and more than half of all that survive were written in the brief span of years that remain. She wrote few poems after 1874, but among them are some of her finest genre sketches of movement and color observed from the world of nature, for this world had become an awesome reality into which she projected her imagination with an artist's mature skill.

The birth of her nephew Gilbert in 1875 was an event which increased in importance, for it brought members of the two houses closer together as the boy grew. He was not destined to survive his ninth year. The death of Samuel Bowles from sheer exhaustion, in 1878, closed a chapter in her life, for he had been the friend whom she had always treated with affectionate deference, as a much-loved elder brother.

Two events now occurred of far reaching consequence. She came to know Helen Hunt Jackson, and her love for Judge Otis Lord became important. Helen Jackson by this time was acclaimed the leading woman poet in America and had become a most successful writer of stories. She had learned about Emily Dickinson's poetry through Colonel Higginson, and she was the only qualified contemporary who believed Dickinson to be an authentic poet. That opinion was of no small moment to the woman who now and then is signing her letters "Dickinson."

Judge Lord had been a lifelong friend of Edward Dickinson. He and his wife had been frequent overnight guests in the Dickinson house and thus Emily had always known him. His wife died in 1877. The attachment between the Judge and Emily became intimate soon thereafter. Marriage may have been contemplated; the nature and degree of her affection is patent in the letters that she wrote him.

Though the outer manifestations of what is commonly called an active life are now absent, the inner never abate, as the letters, particularly those to Mrs. Holland and to Colonel Higginson, make amply clear.

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *late January 1875*

Sister.

This austere Afternoon is more becoming to a Patriot than to one whose Friend is it's sole Land.

No event of Wind or Bird breaks the Spell of Steel.

Nature squanders Rigor – now – where she squandered Love.

Chastening – it may be – the Lass that she receiveth.

My House is a House of Snow – true – sadly – of few.

Mother is asleep in the Library – Vinnie – in the Dining Room – Father – in the Masked Bed – in the Marl House.

How soft his Prison is –
How sweet those sullen Bars –
No Despot – but the King of Down
Invented that Repose!

When I think of his firm Light – quenched so causelessly, it fritters the worth of much that shines. "Dust unto the Dust" indeed – but the final clause of that marvelous sentence – who has rendered it?

"I say unto you," Father would read at Prayers, with a militant Accent that would startle one.

Forgive me if I linger on the first Mystery of the House.

It's specific Mystery – each Heart had before – but within this World. Father's was the first Act distinctly of the Spirit.

Austin's Family went to Geneva, and Austin lived with us four weeks. It seemed peculiar – pathetic – and Antediluvian. We missed him while he was with us and missed him when he was gone.

All is so very curious.

Thank you for that "New Year" – the first with a fracture. I trust it is whole and hale – to you.

"Kingsley" rejoins "Argemone" –

Thank you for the Affection. It helps me up the Stairs at Night, where as I passed my Father's Door – I used to think was safety. The Hand that plucked the Clover – I seek, and am

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 34). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 102–103.

Mrs. Holland had plucked a spray of clover from Edward Dickinson's grave, which ED never visited, and gave it to her. Argemone is the heroine of Kingsley's first novel, *Yeast*. Kingsley died, 23 January 1875.

433

To Mrs. Edward Tuckerman *March 1875?*

Dear Friend,

It was so long my custom to seek you with the birds, they would scarcely feel at home should I do otherwise, though as home itself is far from home since my father died, why should custom tire?

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: (1894) 380; *LL* 296; *L* (1931) 370.

The date "March, 1875," given by Mrs. Todd, was supplied by Mrs. Tuckerman.

434

To Mrs. William A. Stearns *after Easter 1875?*

It is possible, dear friend, that the rising of the one we lost would have engrossed me to the exclusion of Christ's – but for your lovely admonition.

Sabbath morning was peculiarly dear to my father, and his unsuspecting last earthly day with his family was that heavenly one.

Vinnie and I were talking of you as we went to sleep Saturday night, which makes your beautiful gift of to-day almost apparitional.

Please believe how sweetly I thank you.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 376; *LL* 299–300; *L* (1931) 366.

Easter in 1875, the probable year this was written, was 28 March. The note is a response to an Easter greeting.

435

To Mrs. William A. Stearns *early spring 1875?*

Dear Friend,

That a pansy is transitive, is its only pang.
This, precluding that, is indeed divine.

Bringing you handfuls in prospective, thank you for the love. Many an angel, with its needle, toils beneath the snow.

With tenderness for your mate,

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 377; *LL* 297; *L* (1931) 367.
The date assigned by Mrs. Todd is 1875.

436

To Louise and Frances Norcross *mid-April 1875*

I have only a buttercup to offer for the centennial, as an "embattled farmer" has but little time.

Begging you not to smile at my limited meadows, I am modestly

Yours.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 281; *LL* 298; *L* (1931) 255–256.
The unveiling of "The Minute Man" monument at Concord, where the Norcross girls now lived, took place on 19 April 1875. Inscribed on the base of the statue are the lines from Emerson's "Concord Hymn" (1837), the poem which Emerson read for the occasion: "Here once the embattled farmers stood/And fired the shot heard round the world."

437

To Mrs. Edward Tuckerman *mid-April 1875*

I send you inland buttercups as out-door flowers are still at sea.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 380; *LL* 296; *L* (1931) 370.

It is dated by Mrs. Todd: May 1875. But see the preceding letter to the Norcrosses.

438

To Samuel Bowles *about 1875*

Dear friend.

It was so delicious to see you — a Peach before the time, it makes all seasons possible and Zones – a caprice.

We who arraign the "Arabian Nights" for their under statement, escape the stale sagacity of supposing them sham.

We miss your vivid Face and the besetting Accents, you bring from your Numidian Haunts.

Your coming welds anew that strange Trinket of Life, which each of us wear and none of us own, and the phosphorescence of your's startles us for it's permanence. Please rest the Life so many own, for Gems abscond –

In your own beautiful words, for the Voice is the Palace of all of us, "Near, but remote,"

Emily.

If we die, will you come for us, as you do for Father?
"Not born" yourself, "to die," you must reverse us all.

———

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 221–222; *LL* 284–285; *L* (1931) 207: – the body of the letter and the signature. The postscript is printed as a separate message: *L* (1894) 222–223; *LL* 285; *L* (1931) 208.

The date, conjectured from the handwriting, is almost certainly 1875. It was Bowles's custom to be present at commencement exercises in August. The first sentence together with the postscript suggest that perhaps this year he came during the spring, his first visit since he was present with the family at the time of Edward Dickinson's funeral in June 1874.

Letters (1894) and subsequent editions print the following as a separate letter.

> If we die, will you come for us, as you do for father? "Not born," yourself "to die," you must reverse us all.

Last to adhere
When summers swerve away –
Elegy of
Integrity.

To remember our own Mr. Bowles is all we can do.
With grief it is done, so warmly and long, it can never be new.

Emily.

It is not dated, but is placed as one sent to Bowles, presumably in his last illness. The "letter" is in fact a montage of three separate items. The first two sentences conclude this letter. The stanza (AC) is on a separate sheet. The last two sentences constitute the letter sent to Mrs. Bowles after the death of her husband (no. 532). The provenance of the verse is almost certainly Bingham 99–7, described in *Poems* (1955), 964, as written on a sheet of note paper and folded as if enclosed in an envelope. The lines may in fact have been enclosed with letter no. 532, or sent to Mrs. Bowles about the same time, for they are in the handwriting of about 1878. At the time *Poems* was published, the "letter" was thought to be lost; thus the concluding version of the lines as printed in *Poems*, deriving from the montage, is a duplication of the version (Bingham 99–7) already described.

439

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *about 1875*

Sister –

I have the little Book and am twice triumphant – Once for itself, and once for Those who enabled me –

The embarrassment of the Psalmist who knew not what to render his friend – is peculiarly mine – Though he has canceled his consternations, while my own remain –

Thank you with all my strength – and Doctor as yourself – And again yourself for the sweet note.

Nature assigns the Sun –
That – is Astronomy –
Nature cannot enact a Friend –
That – is Astrology.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 35). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *LH* 104.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. The book may have been Dr. Holland's novel *Sevenoaks*, published in 1875, but it is not at present among the Dickinson books. The scripture reference is to Psalms 116.12: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?"

440

To T. W. Higginson *mid-June 1875*

Dear friend –

Mother was paralyzed Tuesday, a year from the evening Father died. I thought perhaps you would care –

Your Scholar.

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 71). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (October 1891) 455; *L* (1894) 319; *LL* 293; *L* (1931) 293.

This note was evidently written during the week of the fifteenth.

441

To T. W. Higginson *July 1875*

Dear friend.

Mother was very ill, but is now easier, and the Doctor thinks that in more Days she may partly improve. She was ignorant at the time and her Hand and Foot left her, and when she asks me the name of her sickness – I deceive for the first time. She asks for my Father, constantly, and thinks it rude he does not come – begging me not to retire at night, lest no one receive him. I am pleased that what grieves ourself so much – can no more grieve him. To have been immortal transcends to become so. Thank you for being sorry.

I thought it value to hear your voice, though at so great distance – Home is so far from Home, since my Father died.

The courtesy to my Brother and Sisters I gave and replace, and think those safe who see your Face.

Your Scholar.

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 72). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 293–294.
This letter responds to a note of sympathy from Higginson, written after he had received the preceding note.

442

To Louise and Frances Norcross *summer 1875*

Dear Children,

I decided to give you one more package of lemon drops, as they only come once a year. It is fair that the bonbons should change hands, you have so often fed me. This is the very weather that I lived with you those amazing years that I had a father. W[illie] D[ickinson']s wife came in last week for a day and a night, saying her heart drove her. I am glad that you loved Miss Whitney on knowing her nearer. Charlotte Brontë said "Life is so constructed that the event does not, cannot, match the expectation."

The birds that father rescued are trifling in his trees. How flippant are the saved! They were even frolicking at his grave, when Vinnie went there yesterday. Nature must be too young to feel, or many years too old.

Now children, when you are cutting the loaf, a crumb, peradventure a crust, of love for the sparrows' table. . . .

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 281; *LL* 298; *L* (1931) 256.
The date Mrs. Todd assigned is retained; the tone of the letter suggests that it was written in the year following her father's death. For a note relating to the Brontë quotation, see letter no. 459.

443

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *early August 1875*

Emily and all that she has are at Sue's service, if of any comfort to Baby–

Will send Maggie, if you will accept her–

Sister–

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 42). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 244.
Susan's third child, Thomas Gilbert Dickinson, was born 1 August 1875.

444

To Helen Hunt Jackson *late October 1875*

Have I a word but Joy?
E. Dickinson.
Who fleeing from the Spring
The Spring avenging fling
To Dooms of Balm –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 51). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *Poems* (1955) 924.
On the last blank page a note in Helen Jackson's hand reads: "This is *mine*, remember, You must send it back to me, or else you will be a robber." (Helen Jackson returned the letter to ED, who kept it, for an explanation of the three lines of verse). The letter was written when ED learned of the marriage of Helen Hunt to William S. Jackson, 22 October 1875. The earliest evidence of a correspondence between them is an envelope (AC), never sent, addressed in the handwriting of about 1868 to Mrs. Helen Hunt. That summer she was in Amherst. Another envelope never sent (AC) is addressed, about 1872, to Bethlehem, New Hampshire, where Mrs. Hunt then summered.

After Mrs. Jackson returned the letter above, ED must have written her again, as the following letter (HCL) from Helen Jackson, dated Colorado Springs, 20 March 1876, indicates:

444a

But you did not send it back, though you wrote that you would. Was this an accident, or a late withdrawal of your consent? Remember that it is mine – not yours – and be honest.

Thank you for not being angry with my impudent request for interpretations.

I do wish I knew just what "dooms" you meant, though!

A very clever man – one of the cleverest I ever met – a Mr. Dudley of Milwaukee, spent a day with us last week, and we talked about you. So threads cross, even on the outermost edges of the web.

I hope some day, somewhere I shall find you in a spot where we can know each other. I wish very much that you would write to me now and then, when it did not bore you. I have a little manuscript volume with a few of your verses in it – and I read them very often – You are a great poet – and it is a wrong to the day you live in, that you will not sing aloud. When you are what men call dead, you will be sorry you were so stingy.

Yours truly
Helen Jackson.

445

To Mrs. James S. Cooper *about 1875*

My family of Apparitions is select, though dim.

———

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 394; *LL* 323; *L* (1931) 383.
This note, in the handwriting of about 1875, was probably sent with flowers.

446

To recipient unknown *about 1875*

Sweet is it as Life, with it's enhancing Shadow of Death.

A Bee his burnished Carriage
Drove boldly to a Rose –
Combinedly alighting –
Himself – his Carriage was –
The Rose received his visit
With frank tranquility
Withholding not a Crescent
To his Cupidity –
Their Moment consummated –
Remained for him – to flee –
Remained for her – of rapture
But the humility.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *BM* 70, poem only; *Poems* (1955) 925–926, entire; *NEQ* XXVIII (1955) 311, entire.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

447

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1875*

Only Woman in the World, Accept a Julep –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 76). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 246.

This and the following brief message to Sue are datable only by handwriting; both seem to have been written about 1875.

448

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1875*

"For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's Angel" –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 34). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 245.

The private association of this quotation from Julius Caesar (III, ii, 183) is not known, but may have reference to a local situation wherein some member of the family, in ED's opinion, was "betrayed" by a friend.

449

To T. W. Higginson *January 1876*

That it is true, Master, is the Power of all you write.

Could it cease to be Romance, it would be Revelation, which is the Seed – of Romance –

I had read "Childhood," with compunction that thought so fair – fall on foreign eyes –

I had also read fervent notices of itself and of you. There is nothing sweeter than Honor, but Love, which is it's sacred price.

I hope most you are happy, and that none closest to you, have received sorrow –

Could "Liquid Hills" be steep?

The last Books that my Father brought me I have felt unwilling to open, and had reserved them for you, because he had twice seen you. They are Theodore Parker, by Frothingham, and George Eliot's Poems. If you have them, please tell me – If not, you will not forbid mine?

Mr. Bowles lent me flowers twice, for my Father's Grave.

To his simplicity
To die – was little Fate –
If Duty live – contented
But her Confederate –

Your Scholar

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 83). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 304.

In this letter ED enclosed five poems: "The last of Summer is delight," "The Heart is the Capital of the Mind," "The Mind lives on the Heart," "The Rat is the concisest Tenant," and "'Faithful to the end' Amended." Higginson's "Childhood Fancies" appeared in the January 1876 issue of *Scribner's Monthly*. Frothingham's *Theodore Parker* and George Eliot's *The Legend of Jubal and Other Poems* were both published in 1874. Higginson appears to have had one of the two she offered, probably the Frothingham, as the next letter indicates.

450

To T. W. Higginson *February 1876*

There is so much that is tenderly profane in even the sacredest Human Life – that perhaps it is instinct and not design, that dissuades us from it.

The Treason of an accent
Might Ecstasy transfer –
Of her effacing Fathom
Is no Recoverer –

It makes me happy to send you the Book. Thank you for accepting

it, and please not to own "Daniel Deronda" till I bring it, when it is done. You ask me if I see any one – Judge Lord was with me a week in October and I talked with Father's Clergyman once, and once with Mr Bowles. Little – wayfaring acts – comprise my "pursuits" – and a few moments at night, for Books – after the rest sleep. Candor – my Preceptor – is the only wile. Did you not teach me that yourself, in the "Prelude" to "Malbone"? You once told me of "printing but a few Poems." I hoped it implied you possessed more ——

Would you show me – one? You asked me if I liked the cold – but it is warm now. A mellow Rain is falling.

It wont be ripe till April – How luscious is the dripping of Febuary eaves! It makes our thinking Pink –

It antedates the Robin – Bereaving in prospective that Febuary leaves ——

Thank you for speaking kindly.

I often go Home in thought to you.

Your Scholar –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 81). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 297–298.

Daniel Deronda began running serially in the March issue of *Harper's Monthly*, and this letter may well have been written after ED had seen an announcement of its impending publication (in book form later in the year), but before she had read the first installment (see letters no. 456 and 457). "Father's Clergyman" was the pastor of the First Church, the Reverend Jonathan L. Jenkins (see letter no. 464). The expression "Candor is the only wile" is ED's succinct rephrasing of the following thought, in Higginson's "Prelude" to his novel *Malbone: An Oldport Romance* (1869): "One learns, in growing older, that no fiction can be so strange nor appear so improbable as would the simple truth. . ."

451

To T. W. Higginson *February 1876*

Did you not receive the Letter – or Book? Dear friend, I am alarmed –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 89). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 305.

452

To T. W. Higginson *February–March 1876*

Could you pardon the elderly Gentleman, who entrusted the circumstances to you, that were designed for him?

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 70). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 293.

Apparently Higginson had written that some mistake had been made, which ED in the following letter tries to explain. The "elderly Gentleman" was Luke Sweetser, now in his mid-seventies, who at this time often addressed and mailed her letters and parcels. There is still extant a note written in a very shaky hand (AC) – on the back of which ED wrote the rough draft of "Bees are Black, with Gilt Surcingles" (1877): "You don't know [how] much I have missed these opportunities of service of late. I shall not believe you are displeased with me until you tell me so. Yours L. Sweetser." It was some such mistake as this which made ED turn such pleasant services over to George Montague, who thenceforth often addressed her letters.

453

To T. W. Higginson *February–March 1876*

Dear friend –

If you would be willing I should tell you how the mistake was – perhaps you could forgive it. An elderly friend addresses the notes to my few friends, and if I send them a Book – folds and mails it for me –

I had asked his permission to fold the Poems – but in sending them to him omitted his name on the note you received – then he thought it for you –

When I knew it, I wrote you – It distressed me extremely – but I hope when I tell you how it is, you will less abhor it – will you not?

Your Scholar –

Fear – like Dying, dilates trust, or enforces it –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 96). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 298.

This letter explains the mystery of the missing volume of George Eliot poems, which presumably Higginson had told her that he had received.

454

To Eugenia Hall *early 1876?*

My little benefactor,

The flowers are very sweet, and I am surprised and charmed.
I raise only robins on my farm and a blossom is quite a guest.

Affectionately
Coz Emily

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text is a transcript made by George Frisbie Whicher (HCL), whose notebook states that it was a two-page note, in ink, with an envelope addressed to Eugenia.

PUBLICATION: *The Collector,* October 1948, in part.

This seems to be the first letter to Genie, who was about twelve.

455

To Eugenia Hall *early 1876*

Dear "Genie."

The lovely flower you sent me, is like a little Vase of Spice and fills the Hall with Cinnamon –

You must have skillful Hands – to make such sweet Carnations. Perhaps your Doll taught you.

I know that Dolls are sometimes wise. Robins are my Dolls.

I am glad you love the Blossoms so well.

I hope you love Birds too.

It is economical. It saves going to Heaven.

Lovingly,
Coz. Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Loveman. Ink. Envelope addressed: "Genie."

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 427; *L* (1931) 415–416.

The handwriting belongs to this period, and the letter may follow the preceding.

456

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about March 1876*

Thank you, dear, for the "Eliot" –
She is the Lane to the Indes, Columbus was looking for.

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 25). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *AM* CXV (1915) 40; *FF* 237, with facsimile.
This note to Sue should be read in connection wtih two letters to Higginson, nos. 450 and 457.

457

To T. W. Higginson *spring 1876*

But two had mentioned the "Spring" to me – yourself and the Revelations. "I – Jesus – have sent mine Angel."

I inferred your touch in the Papers on Lowell and Emerson – It is delicate that each Mind is itself, like a distinct Bird –

I was lonely there was an "Or" in that beautiful "I would go to Amherst," though grieved for it's cause. I wish your friend had my strength for I dont care for roving – She perhaps might, though to remain with you is Journey – To abstain from "Daniel Deronda" is hard – you are very kind to be willing. I would have liked to wait, but "Sue" smuggled it under my Pillow, and to wake so near it overpowered me – I am glad "Immortality" pleased you. I believed it would. I suppose even God himself could not withhold that now – When I think of my Father's lonely Life and his lonelier Death, there is this redress –

Take all away –
The only thing worth larceny
Is left – the Immortality –

My earliest friend wrote me the week before he died "If I live, I will go to Amherst – if I die, I certainly will."

Is your House deeper off?

Your Scholar

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 78). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (October 1891) 455, in part; *L* (1894) 323, in part; *LL* 302, in part; *L* (1931) 301, in part.

This and the following letters to Higginson and his wife (nos. 458–460) were all written about the same time in the spring of 1876. The order of their arrangement here is conjectured from their contents.

ED correctly guessed that Higginson wrote the unsigned review of Lowell's *Among My Books: Second Series* for the March 1876 issue of *Scribner's Monthly*. (It is so identified in Mary Thacher Higginson, *Thomas Wentworth Higginson* . . . , Boston, 1914, 413). The review of Emerson's *Letters and Social Aims* in the April issue, likewise unsigned, may be Higginson's but has not been so identified. The "friend" referred to in the third paragraph is Mrs. Higginson, whose illness was increasing. Higginson's reply to the letter ED wrote to him in February (no. 450) told her that he would be glad to refrain from reading *Daniel Deronda* until he had received the copy she wished to send him. It was published late in the year, after being completed serially in the October issue of *Scribner's Monthly*. The second volume of the presentation set, containing Higginson's signature, is now among the books from his library at HCL. The comment on "Immortality" might apply to the poem " 'Faithful to the end' Amended" (see letter no. 449). "My earliest friend" in all probability was B. F. Newton (see the postscript to letter no. 110). The quotation in the first paragraph is from Revelation 22.16.

458

To T. W. Higginson *spring 1876*

Dear friend.

Your thought is so serious and captivating, that it leaves one stronger and weaker too, the Fine of Delight.

Of it's Bliss to yourself, we are ignorant, though you first teach us "that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit" –

It is still as distinct as Paradise – the opening your first Book –

It was Mansions – Nations – Kinsmen – too – to me –
I sued the News – yet feared – the News
That such a Realm could be –
"The House not made with Hands" it was –
Thrown open wide to me –

I had long heard of an Orchis before I found one, when a child,

but the first clutch of the stem is as vivid now, as the Bog that bore it – so truthful is transport – Though inaudible to you, I have long thanked you.

Silence' oblation to the Ear supersedes sound –
Sweetest of Renowns to remain

Your Scholar –

Is your friend better?
And yourself, well?

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 82).
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 303.
Higginson's first book was *Outdoor Papers* (1863), containing "April Days," "My Outdoor Study," "Water Lilies," "The Life of Birds," ,and "The Procession of Flowers." The quotation in the second sentence is from John 3.6 (see letter no. 558). The lines quoted in the poem are from 2 Corinthians 5.1 (see letters no. 180, 182 and 866).

459

To T. W. Higginson *spring 1876*

I am glad to have been of joy to your friend, even incidentally, and greedy for the supplement of so sweet a privilege. I hope that you had a happy trip, and became refreshed. Labor might fatigue, though it is Action's rest.

The things we thought that we should do
We other things have done
But those peculiar industries
Have never been begun –

The Lands we thought that we should seek
When large enough to run
By Speculation ceded
To Speculation's Son –

The Heaven, in which we hoped to pause
When Discipline was done
Untenable to Logic
But possibly the one –

I am glad you remember the "Meadow Grass."
That forestalls fiction.

I was always told that conjecture surpassed Discovery, but it must have been spoken in caricature, for it is not true –

The long sigh of the Frog
Upon a Summer's Day
Enacts intoxication
Upon the Passer by.

But his receding Swell
Substantiates a Peace
That makes the Ear inordinate
For corporal release –

Would you but guide
Your scholar

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 85). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 296, in part.
Higginson's trips in 1876, according to his diary (HCL), were short ones to fill speaking engagements.
In this letter ED says that conjecture (anticipation, expectation) does not match or surpass discovery (the event). But see letter no. 442, where she seems to imply the opposite.

459A

To T. W. Higginson *1876*

Nature is a Haunted House – but Art – a House that tries to be haunted.

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 42). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 295.
This may have been sent as a separate message or it may have accompanied the preceding letter, for it has the same folds.

460

To Mrs. T. W. Higginson *spring 1876*

Dear friend,

I have your lovely Gift, and am happy and chastened. May I cherish it twice, for itself, and for you?

The tie to one we do not know, is slightly miraculous, but not humbled by test, if we are simple and sacred. Thank you for recollecting me. I have now no Father, and scarcely a Mother, for her Will followed my Father, and only an idle Heart is left, listless for his sake.

I am sorry your Hand harms you – is it easier now? Mr Higginson told me you loved the Buds – You should own my own, but the Orchard is too jocund to fold and the Robins would rob the mail.

Who knocks not, yet does not intrude, is Nature.

Please to thank Mr Higginson for the delightful note – I shall thank him myself – soon – Please tell him the "Madonnas" I see, are those that pass the House to their work, carrying Saviors with them –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 94). Pencil. Envelope addressed: Mrs. Higginson.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 299–300.

This is probably ED's first letter to Mary Channing Higginson. It would seem that Higginson had recently written that his wife was about to send some token, for the opening of letter no. 459 implies as much. It may have been a representation of the madonna and child.

461

To Mrs. William A. Stearns *spring 1876?*

Dear Friends,

Might these be among the fabrics which the Bible designates as beyond rubies?

Certainly they are more accessible to the fingers of your thief

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 377; *LL* 309; *L* (1931) 367.

Presumably sent with flowers. Mrs. Todd dates it: Spring, 1876.

462

To Mrs. James S. Cooper *about 1876*

Dear friend,

I congratulate you.
Disaster endears beyond Fortune –

E. Dickinson –

MANUSCRIPT: Goodell Library. Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 393; *L* (1931) 382.
The date is conjectured from the handwriting. During the year 1876 some ten fires broke out in Amherst, several of them thought to have been of incendiary origin. There are no fire records for that year, but one of them may have been in the Cooper house. The letter does not sound as though the damage had been serious.

463

To Mrs. William A. Stearns *about 8 June 1876*

Love's stricken "why"
Is all that love can speak –
Built of but just a syllable
The hugest hearts that break.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 377; *LL* 309; *L* (1931) 368: *Poems* (1955) 945.
President Stearns died, 8 June 1876.

464

To Jonathan L. Jenkins *about 1876*

It will make Today more homelike, that he who first made Heaven homelike to Father, is with his Children.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Howe. Ink. Addressed on the fold: Mr Jenkins.
PUBLICATION: *FN* 109.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. Perhaps the note was written on the anniversary of her father's death, 16 June. Jenkins had officiated at Edward Dickinson's funeral. The note was perhaps sent to him at a family gathering at Austin's, which ED did not attend.

465

To Samuel Bowles *about 1876*

Of your exquisite Act there can be no Acknowledgment but the Ignominy that Grace gives.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 221; *LL* 284; *L* (1931) 207.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. Perhaps this note thanks Bowles for flowers sent on the second anniversary of her father's death, 16 June 1874.

466

To Samuel Bowles *about 1876*

We part with the River at the Flood through a timid custom, though with the same Waters we have often played.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 210; *LL* 267; *L* (1931) 205.

The handwriting of this message, like that of the message preceding, is almost certainly about 1876, but the occasion which prompted it has not been identified. Perhaps both were written with her father in mind.

467

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1876*

The Ignominy to receive – is eased by the reflection that interchange of infamies – is either's antidote.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 96). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 242.
Dated by handwriting only, this note is placed here because the phrasing somewhat echoes that in letter no. 465.

468

To Mrs. James S. Cooper *4 July 1876?*

The Founders of Honey have no Names—

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. Addressed on the fold: Mrs. Cooper.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 394; *LL* 323; *L* (1931) 383.
The note probably accompanied flowers. The date is conjectured from the handwriting and from the fact that the centennial of the founding of the town of Amherst was celebrated on 4 July 1876 (see letter no. 509).

469

To Mrs. James S. Cooper *about 1876*

Vinnie suggests these little Friends.
Would they be too groveling? And I add a Face from my Garden. Though you met it before, it might not be charmless.

E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 394; *LL* 323; *L* (1931) 383.
This note, also in the handwriting of about 1876, evidently accompanied flowers from Vinnie's garden and from ED's.

470

To T. W. Higginson *August 1876*

Dear friend,
I hope Mrs Higginson is no more ill. I am glad if I did not disturb her. Loneliness for my own Father made me think of her.
Always begins by degrees.

I almost inferred from your accent you might come to Amherst. I would like to make no mistake in a presumption so precious – but a Pen has so many inflections and a Voice but one, will you think it obtuse, if I ask if I quite understood you?

Of their peculiar light
I keep one ray
To clarify the Sight
To seek them by –

Your Scholar –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 97). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 298.
Mary Channing Higginson's father, Dr. Walter Channing, died 27 July 1876. ED evidently has written to her.

471

To Louise and Frances Norcross *August 1876*

Dear Cousins,

Mr. S[weetser] had spoken with pleasure of you, before you spoke of him. Good times are always mutual; that is what makes good times. I am glad it cheered you.

We have had no rain for six weeks except one thunder shower, and that so terrible that we locked the doors, and the clock stopped – which made it like Judgment day. The heat is very great, and the grass so still that the flies speck it. I fear Loo will despair. The notices of the "fall trade" in the hurrying dailies, have a whiff of coolness.

Vinnie has a new pussy the color of Branwell Brontë's hair. She thinks it a little "lower than the angels," and I concur with her. You remember my ideal cat has always a huge rat in its mouth, just going out of sight – though going out of sight in itself has a peculiar charm. It is true that the unknown is the largest need of the intellect, though for it, no one thinks to thank God. . . . Mother is worn with the heat, but otherwise not altering. I dream about father every night, always a different dream, and forget what I am doing daytimes, wondering where he is. Without any body, I keep thinking. What kind can that be?

Dr. Stearns died homelike, asked Eliza for a saucer of strawberries, which she brought him, but he had no hands. "In such an hour as ye think not" means something when you try it.

Lovingly,

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 282; *LL* 298–299; *L* (1931) 256–257.

The reference to advertisements of the "fall trade" in the newspapers places this letter in August. According to the Amherst weather records, the summer of 1876 was unusually hot and dry. President Stearns had died in June (see letter no. 463). Evidently the Norcrosses were as familiar as ED with Elizabeth Gaskell's remarkable and highly controversial *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, first published in 1857, and reissued several times thereafter. Branwell Brontë was the black sheep of the family, and ED's connection of the color of his hair with the color of a new cat of Vinnie's is appropriately explained by a sentence in Mrs. Gaskell's *Life* (chapter VII): "Branwell was rather a handsome boy, with 'tawny' hair, to use Miss Brontë's phrase for a more obnoxious color."

The scripture quotation is from Matthew 24.44: "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

472

To Mrs. T. W. Higginson *late summer 1876*

Dear friend.

The "Happiness" without a cause, is the best Happiness, for Glee intuitive and lasting is the gift of God.

I fear we have all sorrow, though of different forms – but with Life so very sweet at the Crisp, what must it be unfrozen!

I hope you may sometime be so strong as to smile at now –

That is our Hope's criterion, for things that are – are ephemeral, but those to come – long – and besides,

The Flake the Wind exasperate
More eloquently lie
Than if escorted to it's Down
By Arm of Chivalry.

I would love to know your "Ferns and Grasses" and touch your

"Books and Pictures" – but it is of Realms unratified that Magic is made.

I bring you a Fern from my own Forest – where I play every Day.

You perhaps sleep as I write, for it is now late, and I give you Good Night with fictitious lips, for to me you have no Face.

"We thank thee Oh Father" for these strange Minds, that enamor us against thee.

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 66). Ink. Envelope addressed: Mrs. Higginson.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 289.

The enclosed polypody is still in the letter.

473

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *August 1876*

Loved and Little Sister,

Vinnie brought in a sweet pea today, which had a pod on the "off" side. Startled by the omen, I hasten to you.

An unexpected impediment to my reply to your dear last, was a call from my Aunt Elizabeth – "the only male relative on the female side," and though many days since, its flavor of court-martial still sets my spirit tingling.

With what dismay I read of those columns of kindred in the Bible – the Jacobites and the Jebusites and the Hittites and the Jacqueminots!

I am sure you are better, for no rheumatism in its senses would stay after the thermometer struck ninety!

We are revelling in a gorgeous drought.

The grass is painted brown, and how nature would look in other than the standard colors, we can all infer. . . I bade [Sue] call on you, but Vinnie said you were "the other side the globe," yet Vinnie thinks Vermont is in Asia, so I don't intend to be disheartened by trifles.

Vinnie has a new pussy that catches a mouse an hour. We call her the "minute hand." . . .

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 182–183; *LL* 317–318; *L* (1931) 175–176; *LH* 108.

The Hollands were summering at Alexandria Bay, in the Thousand Islands region of the Saint Lawrence. Sue presumably was visiting her sister at Geneva, New York. Aunt Elizabeth was Mrs. Augustus Currier.

474

To Mrs. E. S. Snell and family — *September 1876*

I had a father once.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 378; *LL* 310; *L* (1931) 368.

Professor Ebenezer Snell died, 18 September 1876. This note probably accompanied flowers for his funeral.

475

To Mrs. J. G. Holland — *autumn 1876*

I once more come, with my little Load – Is it too heavy, Sister?

You remember from whom I quoted, when you brought me the Clover?

"I find your Benefits no Burden, Jane."

Had I only a Postal, with your Smile, I should sleep safer.

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 36). Pencil. Addressed on fold: Mrs. Holland.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 106.

The letter contained an enclosure, and the request is worded as though the "burden" were not new. It was understood by the Holland family that ED made a practice of asking Mrs. Holland to address and forward letters to the Reverend Charles Wadsworth. The quotation is from *Jane Eyre*, chapter 15.

476

To T. W. Higginson — *October 1876*

Dear friend –

Are you willing to tell me what is right? Mrs. Jackson – of Colorado

– was with me a few moments this week, and wished me to write for this – I told her I was unwilling, and she asked me why? – I said I was incapable and she seemed not to believe me and asked me not to decide for a few Days – meantime, she would write me – She was so sweetly noble, I would regret to estrange her, and if you would be willing to give me a note saying you disapproved it, and thought me unfit, she would believe you – I am sorry to flee so often to my safest friend, but hope he permits me –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 76). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (October 1891) 451; *L* (1894) 321–322; *LL* 301; *L* (1931) 299.

To explain this letter it is necessary to go back to the summer. ED during this year was in correspondence with Mrs. Jackson, and received from her a letter (HCL), dated: Princeton, Mass/Aug. 20./1876:

476a

My dear Miss Dickinson,

How could you possibly have offended me? I am sorry that such an idea should have suggested itself to you.

I have often and often thought of sending you a line, but there are only sixty minutes to an hour. There are not half enough.

I enclose to you a circular which may interest you. When the volume of Verse is published in this series, I shall contribute to it: and I want to persuade you to. Surely, in the shelter of such *double* anonymousness as that will be, you need not shrink. I want to see some of your verses in print. Unless you forbid me, I will send some that I have. May I? – It will be some time before this volume appears. There ought to be three or four volumes of stories first, I suppose. –

My husband is here with me: and we are enjoying this lovely N. England country, very much: but we shall be here only a few days longer, having that great "chore" of the Exposition to do.

The address

Care of Messrs Roberts Bros. Boston

will always find me, wherever I am: – and I am always glad to get a line from you.

Thank you for writing in such plain letters! Will you not send me some verses?

Truly your friend
Helen Jackson

P.S. If you ever see Dr. Cate, pray give my love to him; — mine & Mr. Jacksons also.

It seems to answer a letter from ED inquiring why Mrs. Jackson had not written. The first of the poems in Helen Jackson's possession were probably copies she had made of those sent to Colonel Higginson. The enclosed circular dealt with the "No Name Series" of books soon to be issued by Roberts Brothers of Boston, under the editorship of Thomas Niles. They were to be anonymous, each, according to the circular, to be written by "a great unknown." The first was Helen Hunt Jackson's *Mercy Philbrick's Choice*, published in September. ED evidently withheld reply, and Mrs. Jackson visited Amherst on 10 October and paid a call. ED's letter to Higginson written shortly thereafter drew this response from him (HCL), dated: Newport, R. I./Oct. 22. 1876:

476b

My dear friend

My wife wishes to thank you very much for your note & sweet little rosebuds. We are quite busy, as we are just going to housekeeping, which pleases us very much; we have a nice American woman who is to keep house for us, & we both prefer it. (For six years we have been boarding.) When you come to Newport, my wife says, you must come & see us.

Now as to your letter of inquiry; It is always hard to judge for another of the bent of inclination or range of talent; but I should not have thought of advising you to write stories, as it would not seem to me to be in your line. Perhaps Mrs. Jackson thought that the change & variety might be good for you: but if you really feel a strong unwillingness to attempt it, I don't think she would mean to urge you. The celebrated prison-reformer, Mrs. Fry, made it one of her rules that we must follow, not force, Providence; & there is never any good in forcing it.

If you like to do it, I should be glad to be remembered to your brother & sister, and to your sister-in-law.

Ever your friend

T. W. Higginson

PS My wife thought you might like to have this photograph of me, unless you have it; as it is in some respects the best I have ever had taken, though the expression is not altogether true.

Higginson misunderstood, thinking the circular spoke of stories only. The following letter (HCL) Helen Jackson wrote from Ashfield shortly after her call [part has been cut away]:

476c

My dear friend,

I [keep] my promise so [promptly] that I am w[riting] you before bre[akfast, but] it is simply a [post]script to my [call the other] day; which re[ally I] found as mu[ch too] short as you [may] possibly have [felt it.]

I am ver[y sorry if] I have seemed [neglectful] and I hope [to hear from] you again. [I feel] as if I ha[d been] very imperti[nent that] day [in] speaking to you [as] I did,—accusing you of living away from the sunlight—and [telling] you that you [looke]d ill, which is a [mor]tal price of ill[ness] at all times, but re[al]ly you look[ed] so [wh]ite and [mo]th-like[!] Your [hand] felt [l]ike such a wisp in mine that you frigh[tened] me. I felt [li]ke a [gr]eat ox [tal]king to a wh[ite] moth, and beg[ging] it to come and [eat] grass with me [to] see if it could not turn itself into beef! How stupid.—

This morning I have read over again the last verses you sent me: I find them more clear than I thought they were. Part of the dimness must have been in me. Yet I have others which I like better. I like your simplest and [most direct] lines best [*page cut away*]

You say you find great pleasure in reading my verses. Let somebody somewhere whom you do not know have the same pleasure in reading yours: [*strip cut away*]

Goodbye. Whenever you like to send me a word, I shall always be

glad to hear: and for all the verses you send me, I shall thank you. – [Roberts Bros. Boston] is the address which will always find me wherever I am.

Most truly yours
Helen Jackson

477

To T. W. Higginson *late October 1876*

Dear friend.

Except your coming, I know no Gift so great – and in one extent, it exceeds that, – it is permanent.

Your Face is more joyful, when you speak – and I miss an almost arrogant look that at times haunts you – but with that exception, it is so real I could think it you.

Thank you with delight – and please to thank your friend for the lovely suggestion.

I hope she has no suffering now –

Was it Browning's Flower, that "Ailed till Evening"? I shall think of your "Keeping House" at Night, when I close the shutter – but to be Mrs – Higginson's Guest, is the Boon of Birds. Judge Lord was with us a few days since – and told me the Joy we most revere – we profane in taking.

I wish that was wrong. Mrs Jackson has written. It was not stories she asked of me. But may I tell her just the same that you dont prefer it? Thank you, if I may, for it almost seems sordid to refuse from myself again.

My Brother and Sister speak of you – and covet your remembrance – and perhaps you will not reject my own, to Mrs Higginson?

Summer laid her supple Glove
In it's sylvan Drawer –
Wheresoe'er, or was she –
The demand of Awe?

Your Scholar.

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 77). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 322–323; *LL* 301–302; *L* (1931) 300.

This replies to his letter of 22 October, and thanks him for the photograph. The quotation (also in letter 337) is from *Sordello*, II, 290–295:

> A plant they have, yielding a three-leaved bell
> Which whitens at the heart ere noon, and ails
> Till evening; evening gives it to her gales
> To clear away with such forgotten things
> As are an eyesore to the morn: this brings
> Him to their mind, and bears his very name.

478

To Mrs. Joseph A. Sweetser — *late October 1876?*

Cousin T[imothy] and Cousin O[livia Norcross] little thought when they were paying their antiquated respects to Aunt Katie that they were defrauding Emily of that last moment – but they needed it most – new moments will grow.

When I found it beyond my power to see you, I designed to write you, immediately, but the Lords came as you went, and Judge Lord was my father's closest friend, so I shared my moments with them till they left us last Monday; then seeing directly after, the death of your loved Dr. A——, I felt you might like to be alone – though Death is perhaps an intimate friend, not an enemy. Beloved Shakespeare says, "He that is robbed and smiles, steals something from the thief." . . .

Maggie said you asked should you "eat the flower." Please consult the bees – they are the only authority on Etruscan matters. Vinnie said the sherry I sent you was brandy – a vital misapprehension. Please also forgive it. I did not intend to be so base to the aunt who showed me the first mignonette, and listened with me to the great wheel, from Uncle Underwood's "study," and won me in "divers other ways" too lovely to mention. Of all this we will talk when you come again.

Meanwhile accept your

Trifling Niece.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 411; *L* (1931) 401.

The date of the letter is conjectural. It belongs here if the visit from the Lords is the same visit as that mentioned in the preceding letter to Higginson. Mrs. Todd placed it with letters written in 1884, but it seems

to have been sent while Mrs. Lord was living. She died in 1877, and until her death the Lords were always guests in the Dickinson home when they visited Amherst. After that time Judge Lord, with his nieces, stopped at the Amherst House. The quotation is from *Othello* (I, iii, 208): "The robb'd that smiles steals something from the thief."

479

To Louise and Frances Norcross *November 1876?*

. . . Oh that beloved witch-hazel which would not reach me till part of the stems were a gentle brown, though one loved stalk as hearty as if just placed in the mail by the woods. It looked like tinsel fringe combined with staider fringes, witch and witching too, to my joyful mind.

I never had seen it but once before, and it haunted me like childhood's Indian pipe, or ecstatic puff-balls, or that mysterious apple that sometimes comes on river-pinks; and is there not a dim suggestion of a dandelion, if her hair were ravelled and she grew on a twig instead of a tube, – though this is timidly submitted. For taking Nature's hand to lead her to me, I am softly grateful – was she willing to come? Though her reluctances are sweeter than other ones' avowals.

Trusty as the stars
Who quit their shining working
Prompt as when I lit them
In Genesis' new house,
Durable as dawn
Whose antiquated blossom
Makes a world's suspense
Perish and rejoice.

Love for the cousin sisters, and the lovely alien. . . .

Lovingly,

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 283; *LL* 310; *L* (1931) 257–258.
Mrs. Todd dated the letter: November, 1876.

480

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *late 1876*

Sue – this is the last flower –

To wane without disparagement
In a dissembling hue
That will not let the Eye decide
If it abide or no
is Sunset's – perhaps – only.

Emily

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 54). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 265.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting, from the apparent time of year the flower was sent, and from the fact that the identical lines are incorporated in a letter to Higginson written in January 1877 (no. 486). A variant of the quatrain is in a letter to Dr. Holland (no. 544).

481

To Mrs. T. W. Higginson *Christmas 1876*

Dear friend.

I wish you were strong like me.

I am bringing a little Granite Book you can lean upon. I hope you may not prohibit me. I have not asked Mr – Higginson's leave.

I am sorry you need Health, but rejoice you do not Affection – That can be growing while you rest, for the Heart is the "seed" of which we read that "the Birds of Heaven lodge in it's Branches." With Christmas' permission and affection for Mr – Higginson, I am whom you infer –

———

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 80). Ink. Envelope addressed: Mrs. Higginson./Newport/Rhode Island.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 305.

The book is Emerson's *Representative Men* (new edition, J. R. Osgood, 1876). It is in HCL, and is inscribed by ED: "To M C H from Emily Dickinson Christmas, 1876." Higginson wrote his sister Anna on 28 De-

cember (HCL): "Last night the Warings had their novel wedding festival of a dozen people . . . The Woolseys were bright as usual & wrote some funny things for different guests – one imaginary letter to me from my partially cracked poetess at Amherst, who writes to me & signs 'Your scholar.' (N.B. She writes to Mary now & sent her Emerson's 'Representative Men' as 'a little granite book, for you to lean on!') . . ." The quotation from Matthew 13.32 reads: ". . . so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

482

To the Jenkins children *about 1876*

Happy Did and Mac!

We can offer you nothing so charming as your own Hearts, which we would seek to possess, had we the requisite Wiles –

MANUSCRIPT: Howe. Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 370; *LL* 280; *FN* 60; *L* (1931) 361.
The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

483

To Mrs. Jonathan L. Jenkins *about 1876*

Whose tenderness to my own Sister, constrains me to cherish her's.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 41). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *FN* 85.
The note may have accompanied flowers sent to Mrs. Jenkins on some occasion when a sister was visiting her. The handwriting places it about this time. During 1877, and perhaps before, Lavinia suffered a "singular illness" (see letter no. 525) for which evidently the ministrations of a sympathetic pastor's wife were more effective than those of a physician. The note was certainly written before the Jenkinses left Amherst in May 1877.

484

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1876*

"Doth forget that ever he heard the name of Death."

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 168). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 255.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. Though the occasion that prompted this note is not known, the quotation from *Coriolanus* (III, i, 256–258) leads one to conjecture that the message followed an angry outbreak of feeling on the part of someone.

> His heart's his mouth:
> What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent;
> And, being angry, does forget that ever
> He heard the name of death.

The lines are spoken by Menenius Agrippa, Coriolanus's friend, in defense of Coriolanus. The context strongly suggests that ED wrote this as a tender note of apology for one whose heart was frequently her mouth, perhaps for Lavinia.

485

To Mrs. Jonathan L. Jenkins *about 1877*

Dear friend.

Were the Velocity of Affection as perceptible as it's Sanctity, Day and Night would be more Affecting.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 44). Ink. Addressed: Mrs Jenkins.
PUBLICATION: *FN* 116.

The handwriting is of this period. The same sentence is incorporated in the following letter to Higginson.

486

To T. W. Higginson *early January 1877*

Is the Year too elderly for your acceptance of Lowell, as a slight symbol of a Scholar's Affection? I designed "Harold" to accompany Emerson, but Tennyson declines – like Browning – once so rare!

To wane without disparagement
In a dissembling hue
That will not let the eye decide
If it abide or no

is sunset's, perhaps – only. Please remember me with thoughtfulness to Mrs – Higginson, to whom I shall soon write. Were the velocity of Affection as perceptible as it's sanctity, Day and Night would be more affecting.

My Brother has been very ill for three months, of Malarial Fever – which he took at the Centennial and we have feared he would die.

I thought your approbation Fame – and it's withdrawal Infamy. I hope I in no way thought wrong of Mrs Jackson's wish – Did I – could you excuse it.

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 87). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 302.
ED perhaps refers to Lowell's *Three Memorial Poems* (1877) and Tennyson's *Harold, a Drama* (1876). Austin attended the Philadelphia Centennial in the middle of October.

487

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *early 1877*

Dear Sister.

I have felt so sweet an impatience to write you, that I thought it perhaps inordinate, and to be disciplined, like other unruly wishfulness – but however you stem Nature, she at last succeeds.

Your Letters have the peculiar worth that attaches to all prowess, as each is an achievement for your delicate Eyes. I almost fear you urge them too far, though to lag is stale to a rapid Spirit –

I hope you may live till I am asleep in my personal Grave, not but Earth is Heaven, but I would not like to outlive the smile on your guileless Face. Doctor's "Child Wife" – indeed – if not Mr Copperfield's.

This is a stern Winter, and in my Pearl Jail, I think of Sun and Summer as visages unknown.

The Sermon you failed to hear, I can lend you – though Legerde-

main is unconveyed – and "Corn in the Ear," Audacity, these inclement Days.

I was much impressed by your sweetness to Austin. He seems the "Child of the Regiment" since he was so sick, and every tenderness to him is caress to us.

Congratulate the Doctor on his growing Fame.

"Stratford on Avon" – accept us all!

With love for your sweet Descendants – and the wish for yourself, I am

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 38). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 110.

The Hollands were probably in Philadelphia for the Centennial Exposition when Dr. Wadsworth preached "God's Culture" on 30 November. It was printed shortly thereafter. A chapter in Higginson's *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (1870) is titled: "The Baby of the Regiment."

488

To T. W. Higginson *early 1877*

Dear friend.

Thank you for permission to write Mrs Higginson. I hope I have not fatigued her – also for thinking of my Brother, who is slowly better, and rides for an hour, kind Days. I am glad if I did as you would like. The degradation to displease you, I hope I may never incur.

Often, when troubled by entreaty, that paragraph of your's has saved me – "Such being the Majesty of the Art you presume to practice, you can at least take time before dishonoring it," and Enobarbus said "Leave that which leaves itself."

I shall look with joy for the "Little Book," because it is your's, though I seek you in vain in the Magazines, where you once wrote –

I recently found two Papers of your's that were unknown to me, and wondered anew at your withdrawing Thought so sought by others. When Flowers annually died and I was a child, I used to read Dr Hitckcock's Book on the Flowers of North America. This comforted their Absence – assuring me they lived.

Your Scholar –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 79). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 324–325; *LL* 303–304; *L* (1931) 302–303.

The first quotation is from Higginson's April 1862 essay in the *Atlantic Monthly*, which first impelled her to write him (see letter no. 260). The second quotation are lines spoken by Antony, not Enobarbus, in *Antony and Cleopatra* III, xi, 17–20:

> Pray you, look not sad,
> Nor make replies of loathness; take the hint
> Which my despair proclaims. Let that be left
> Which leaves itself

The "Little Book" was Higginson's *A Book of American Explorers* (Young Folks Series), published about 1 April 1877. ED may have had in mind Edward Hitchcock's *Catalogue of Plants Growing . . . in the Vicinity of Amherst* (1829). Austin's recovery was slow (see letter no. 486).

489

To Samuel Bowles — *about 1877*

Dear friend,

You have the most triumphant Face out of Paradise – probably because you are there constantly, instead of ultimately –

> Ourselves – we do inter – with sweet derision
> The Channel of the Dust – who once achieves –
> Invalidates the Balm of that Religion
> That doubts – as fervently as it believes.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 220; *LL* 271; *L* (1931) 206–207.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. A photograph of Bowles taken about this time – he was just past fifty – is reproduced in this volume. This letter may acknowledge receipt of a copy of it.

490

To Mrs. J. G. Holland — *early 1877*

Austin will come tomorrow.

"Tomorrow" – whose location
The Wise deceives
Though it's hallucination
Is last that leaves –
Tomorrow – thou Retriever
Of every tare –
Of Alibi art thou
Or ownest where?

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 39). Ink. Dated: Saturday Night.
PUBLICATION: *LH* 111.

The date of this letter is determined by the two which follow, and confirmed by the handwriting. Evidently the Hollands had extended a casual invitation to Austin to visit them when he was next in New York. One infers from the next letter that the attempt by ED to reply for him, in this metaphoric language, he felt to be somewhat egregious, but accepted the incident as trivial.

491

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *early 1877*

Will my little Sister excuse me?

"Douglass, Douglass, tender and true" who never swindled me! I am ashamed and sorry. I meant hypothetic tomorrows – though are there any other?

I deserve to be punished. I am – in regret.

Austin said he should write you, and that Sue w'd too – but he is overcharged with care, and Sue with scintillation, and I fear they have not –

Austin was pleased and surprised, that you wished for him, and still hopes he may go, but not now – but "Beyond," as the Vane says – You remember Little Nell's Grandfather leaned on his Cane on the Knoll that contained her, with "She will come tomorrow." That was the kind of Tomorrow I meant –

I hope I have not tired "Sweetest Eyes were ever seen," for whose beloved Acts, both revealed and covert, I am each Day more fondly, their Possessor's Own –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 40). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *LH* 112.

This replies to a query from Mrs. Holland, written after she had received the foregoing letter, asking why Austin had not arrived. The tension between the two Amherst households is made explicit in the fourth paragraph (see letters no. 484 and 736). The popular "Douglas" poem, set to music, was written by Dinah Maria Craik (Miss Mulock). The final quotation is from Mrs. Browning's "Catarina to Camoens" (see also letter no. 801).

492

To Mrs. J. G. Holland — *about March 1877*

Sister.

The vitality of your syllables compensates for their infrequency. There is not so much Life as *talk* of Life, as a general thing. Had we the first intimation of the Definition of Life, the calmest of us would be Lunatics!

Austin described his call in his own way, which was of course inimitable.

I hope those young Men have the supports of the Gospel, though that is a dim Elixir, in cases like their's.

Austin said he was much ashamed of Mattie – and she was much ashamed of him, she imparted to us. They are a weird couple.

I am glad if you love your Clergyman, though the error to love our's has cost us severely.

God seems much more friendly through a hearty Lens.

There is a Dove in the Street and I own beautiful Mud – so I know Summer is coming. I was always attached to Mud, because of what it typifies – also, perhaps, a Child's tie to primeval Pies.

Vinnie put on fresh Cheeks three times, for the Doctor – but I thought I should have time to change mine, after he came –

As it proved, I did.

I hope you are both safe and in sweet health, and that at some stage of my swift career, I shall again meet you.

Were but our own immortal Mortals, as with us as Nature, we should demand few Alms.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 41). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *LH* 113–114.

Dr. Holland took a vacation in Northampton for the week of 6 February. Evidently Austin and Mattie (now ten years old) called on him there. Jenkins preached his farewell sermon in the First Church on 11 February.

493

To Edward (Ned) Dickinson *March 1877*

Dear Ned –

I send you a Portrait of the Parish, and the first Sugar – Dont bite the Parish, by mistake, though you may be tempted –

A Field of Stubble, lying sere
Beneath the second Sun –
It's Toils to Brindled People thrust –
It's Triumphs – to the Bin –
Accosted by a timid Bird
Irresolute of Alms –
Is often seen – but seldom felt,
On our New England Farms –

I rejoice you are better –
Grandma's fervent love –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 85). Pencil. Addressed on the fold: Ned.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 257.

In mid-February 1877, Ned, now fifteen, was the victim of a seizure which greatly alarmed his family. He recovered shortly, but the attacks became recurrent.

494

To Mrs. William A. Stearns *early 1877?*

Dear Friend,

The little package of nectar mother opened herself, though her hands are frail as a child's.

She could not believe them real till I had hidden one in her mouth, which somewhat convinced her. She asks me to thank you tenderly. The love of her friends is the only remnant of her grieved life, and she clings to it timidly.

I hope you are quite well, and am sure we sometimes think of each other, endeared by that most hallowed thorn, a mutual loss.

With sweet remembrance for your niece, of whom my sister speaks,

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 378; *L* (1931) 368.

Mrs. Todd says this was written in thanks for strawberries sent to Mrs. Dickinson perhaps in March 1877.

495

To Mrs. Jonathan L. Jenkins — *1 April 1877*

May the Love that occasioned the first "Easter," shelter a few this bereaved Day.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 40). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 374; *FN* 118; *L* (1931) 364.

Easter in 1877 was on 1 April. Mrs. Jenkins' father died at Lowell on 18 March.

496

To Sally Jenkins — *about 1877?*

Will the sweet child who sent me the butterflies, herself a member of the same ethereal nation, accept a rustic kiss, flavored, we trust, with clover?

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 371; *FN* 64–65; *L* (1931) 361.

An empty envelope (HCL – L 48) survives, addressed in pencil: Katie "Did,"/from/Katie did'nt –. If the above letter was sent in this envelope – and it was about this time that ED was writing notes to the Jenkins children – the letter belongs here. Sally's nickname was "Did."

497

To the Jenkins children *1877?*

Dear Brother and Sister,

I take you with me to my sleep, but if I do not find it for tenderness for [you], believe me at your side.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text is from an unpublished letter (HCL) written by MacGregor Jenkins to Martha Dickinson Bianchi in 1930. It follows the transcript verbatim except for a semicolon which Jenkins placed after the salutation — a form of punctuation which ED never so used.

Any date is conjectural, but clearly the note was written after the acquaintance with the children had been warmly established. In 1877 MacGregor was eight and his sister about eleven.

498

To Mrs. T. W. Higginson *early spring 1877*

Dear friend.

I cannot let the Grass come without remembering you, and half resent my rapid Feet, when they are not your's – The power to fly is sweet, though one defer the flying, as Liberty is Joy, though never used.

I give you half my Birds – upon the sweet condition that you will bring them back – yourself, and dwell a Day with me, and Bliss without a price, I earned myself of Nature –

> Of whose electric Adjunct
> Not anything is known –
> Though it's unique Momentum
> Inebriate our own.

Forgive me if I come too much – the time to live is frugal – and good as is a better earth, it will not quite be this.

How could I find the way to you and Mr Higginson without a Vane, or any Road?

They might not need me – yet they might –
I'll let my Heart be just in sight –
A smile so small as mine might be
Precisely their necessity –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 90). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 307–308.
ED knew that Mary Channing Higginson, who died the following September, was seriously ill. The date is conjectured from the handwriting. For a discussion of the two quatrains, see *Poems* (1955) 958–960. See also letter no. 499.

499

To the Jenkins family *spring 1877*

Dear friends,

I send you this little Antidote to the love of others – Whenever you feel yourselves enticed, cling to it's Admonition –

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 46). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FN* 126.
This was probably sent to the Jenkinses before they left Amherst for Pittsfield in May. It evidently enclosed a poem, almost certainly the following (HCL), said by MacGregor Jenkins (in *FN*) to have been sent to his mother at the time of departure.

They might not need me – yet they might.
I'll let my Heart be just in sight –
A smile so small as mine might be
Precisely their necessity –

500

To Mrs. Henry Hills *about 1877*

"Give us this Day our daily Bread," omits a fragrant Adjunct –

—

MANUSCRIPT: Jones Library. Ink. Unpublished.
The date is conjectured from the handwriting. The note may have accompanied a gift from the Dickinson kitchen.

501

To Mrs. Jonathan L. Jenkins *late May 1877*

Dear friend,

It was pathetic to see your Voice instead of hearing it, for it has grown sweetly familiar in the House, as a Bird's. Father left us in June – you leave us in May. I am glad there will be no April till another year. Austin brought the note and waited like a hungry Boy for his crumb of words. Be sure to speak his name next time, he looks so solitary.

He told me that he could not sleep Friday night or Saturday night, and so rose and read lethargic Books to stupefy himself.

Sorrow is unsafe when it is real sorrow. I am glad so many are counterfeits – guileless because they believe themselves.

Kiss Diddie and Mac for us, precious Refugees, with love for our Brother whom with you we follow in the peculiar distance, "even unto the end."

Perhaps it is "the end" now. I think the Bell thought so because it bade us all goodbye when you stood in the Door.

You concealed that you heard it. Thank you.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 374, in part; *FN* 134–135, in part; *L* (1931) 364–365, in part.

The *Amherst Record* for Wednesday 18 April 1877, announced that Jenkins preached his first sermon in the First Church at Pittsfield on the previous Sunday. This letter, with its clear reference to the growing breach between Austin and Susan, evidently acknowledges a call that Mrs. Jenkins made shortly before the family left Amherst in May. The scripture quotation is from Matthew 28.20.

502

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *late May 1877*

Dear friend.

I hesitate where you are, but decide to indite my Letter to my Sister in "Alexandria Bay," as the Irishman does to his "Mother in Dublin."

You have been magnanimous – and I requite you with nothing – the Sum that Benefactors love.

The Days are very hot and the Weeds pant like the centre of Summer. They say the Corn likes it. I thought there were others besides the Corn. How deeply I was deluded! Vinnie rocks her Garden and moans that God wont help her –

I suppose he is too busy, getting "angry with the Wicked – every Day."

He loves too homogeneously for Vinnie's special Mind.

Would you believe that our sacred Neighbors, the Mr and Mrs Sweetser, were so enamored of "Nicholas Minturn," that they borrow our Number before it is cold? But Youth, like Indian Summer, comes twice a Year –

Vinnie says I must go – or the Mail will leave me.

The etiquette of the admonition is questionable – though of it's imperativeness there is no doubt.

I must just show you a Bee, that is eating a Lilac at the Window. There – there – he is gone! How glad his family will be to see him!

Bees are Black, with Gilt Surcingles –
Buccaneers of Buzz.
Ride abroad in ostentation
And subsist on Fuzz.

Fuzz ordained – not Fuzz contingent –
Marrows of the Hill.
Jugs – a Universe's fracture
Could not jar or spill.

Emily.

Manuscript: HCL (H 42). Ink.

Publication: *LH* 115–116.

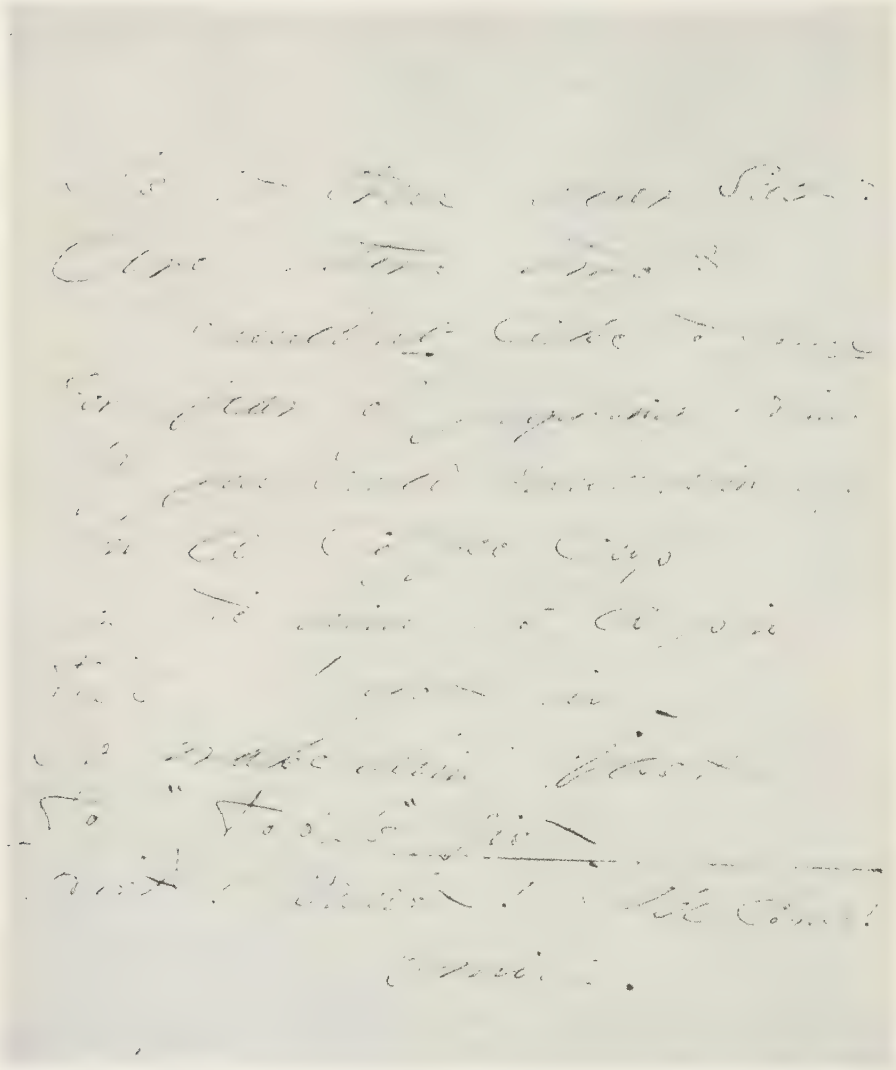
Holland's last novel *Nicholas Minturn* appeared serially in *Scribner's Monthly* during 1876–1877. The reference to lilacs fixes the date. The scripture quotation is from Psalm 7.11.

Amherst Jany 1 1872

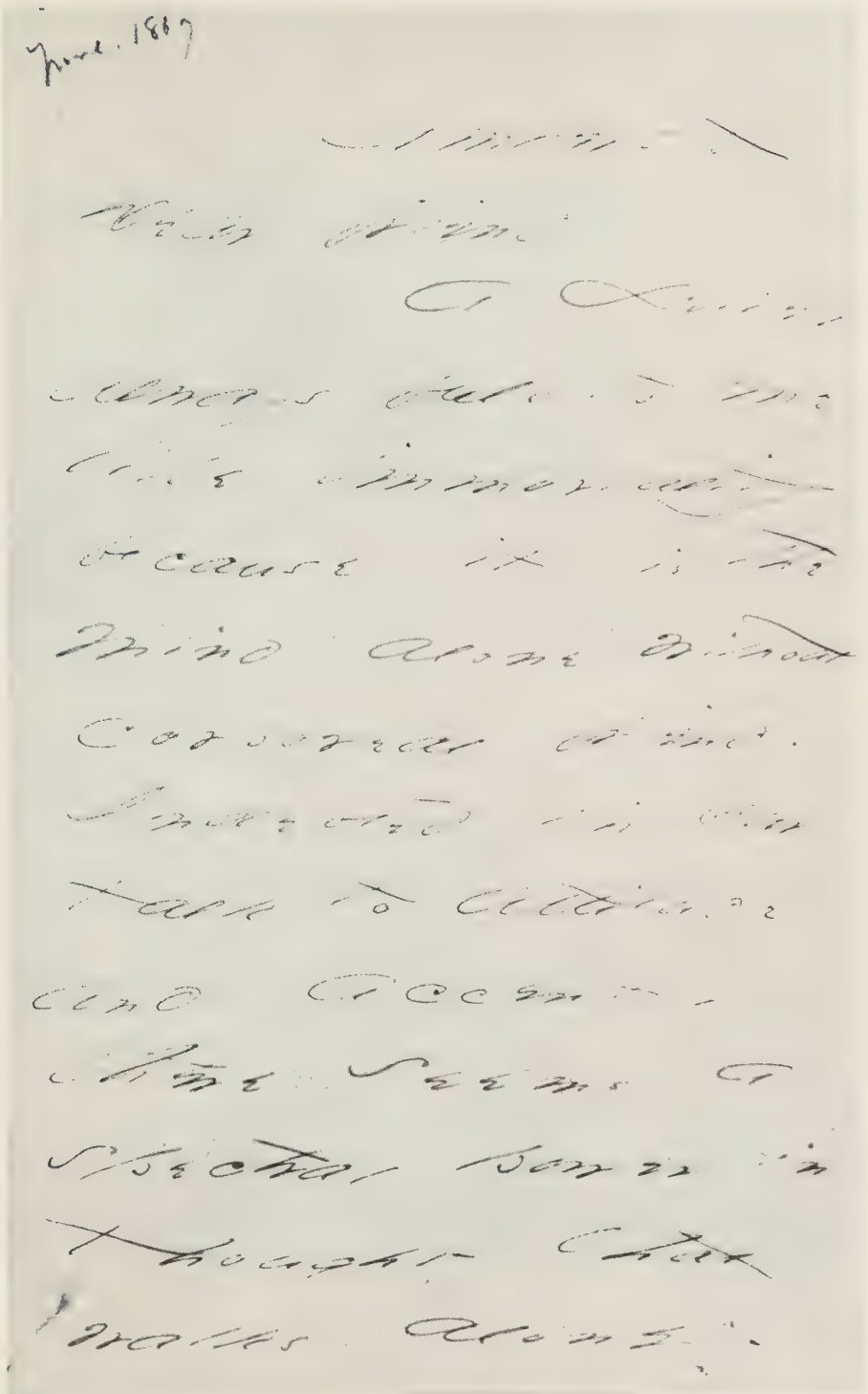
My dear Brother

as Father was going to Northampton would thought of coming down to see you I thought I would improve the opportunity and write you a few lines We miss you very much indeed you cannot think how odd it seems without you there was always such a bustle whenever you was I miss Mary Bodfellow very much for she is more than can get any man for Aunt Elizabeth is opposed to stay alone and Lavinia has to stop with Vine but I have the pleasure of looking under the bed every night when I undress as you may suppose the Hens get along splendidly the Chickens you carry first I am afraid they will be so large that you cannot fatten them with the rest when you get home the speckled hens are coming off with a brood of Chickens one found a hen's nest with four Eggs in it I took out three and brought them in the next day I went to see if there had been any more and there had not been very long since the one that was there had gone so I suppose a skunk had been there or else a hen I like the life of a skunk and I dont know which the Hen Mary Bodfellow gets her eggs at the barn and I am sure I have three dozen Eggs that lays on the ground the nests are so high that they cannot reach them from the ground I expect we shall have to make some ladders for them to get up on. Mr Wallace found the hen roost Father another day and wanted to know what you could eat and sent you Father Bodfellow some money and very glad we were to get it you must write often to us the Temperance dinner went off very well the other day all the Pelhs except Mr. and I think was there Mr Hastings Mr Cutler and Mr Hastings Mr Cutler came in day or two in front and so they were going to make a call on Lavinia Evening which I suppose will be very pleasant Mrs Dorr has had a nice present at Mr Bodfellows that her sweetness is of thousand dollars worth of a watch mother have real a great deal better than he does at present Mrs Wallace and Mrs Hastings took tea here the other night they were going to move next week they have made out to get one of the Bodfellows to sell plus of dilapidation which is a matter of great rejoicing to the Pelhs as ours really was Enough to make one cry and I was glad it has got out of sight and hearing too – there was going to be a great fuss up at Mr Dorrs in their building up we were all sorry could never hope you were the worse – we have very pleasant weather now Mr Goodale was down here on Sunday last Thursday Tom was down I suppose you saw him going by you could say hi to you the week we were Parson Atkinson had a fit the other day and lost his tongue with – we say it is a very day and I can think of Nothing more to say at present shall expect an answer to my letter soon Charles Richardson has got back and is with Mr Dickinson store Sabina is not running after him at all she had not seen him when he last was here which was Saturday I suppose she would send her regards to you if she knew I was going to write to you – I must now close – will send a good deal of love to you and hope you are getting along well and enjoy your self –

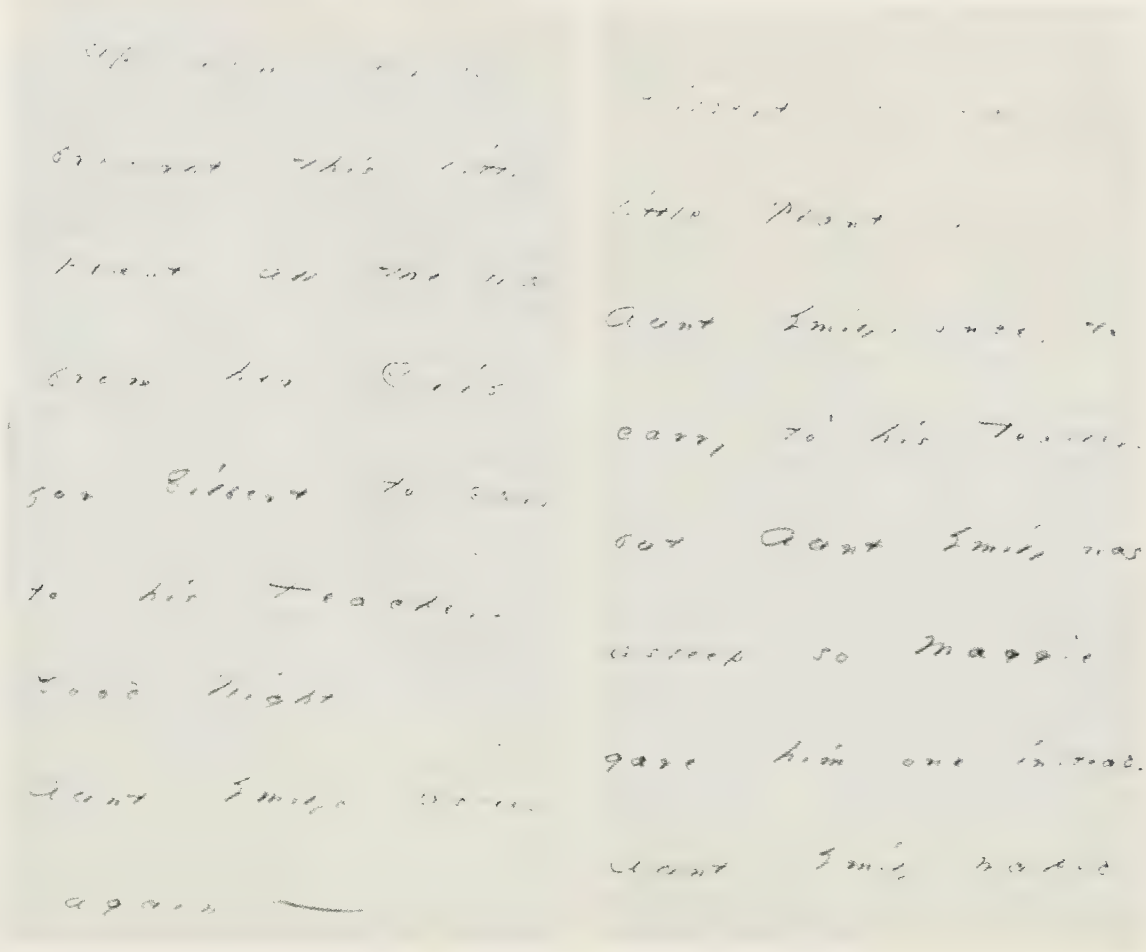
your affectionate sister Emily



Letter 232



Letter 330



Letter 711

To T. W. Higginson *June 1877*

Dear friend.

I find you with Dusk – for Day is tired, and lays her antediluvian cheek to the Hill like a child.

Nature confides now –

I hope you are joyful frequently, these beloved Days. And the health of your friend bolder.

I remember her with my Blossoms and wish they were her's.

> Whose Pink career may have a close
> Portentous as our own, who knows?
> To imitate these Neighbors fleet
> In awe and innocence, were meet.

Summer is so kind I had hoped you might come. Since my Father's dying, everything sacred enlarged so – it was dim to own – When a few years old – I was taken to a Funeral which I now know was of peculiar distress, and the Clergyman asked "Is the Arm of the Lord shortened that it cannot save?"

He italicized the "cannot." I mistook the accent for a doubt of Immortality and not daring to ask, it besets me still, though we know that the mind of the Heart must live if it's clerical part do not. Would you explain it to me?

I was told you were once a Clergyman. It comforts an instinct if another have felt it too. I was rereading your "Decoration." You may have forgotten it.

> Lay this Laurel on the One
> Too intrinsic for Renown –
> Laurel – vail your deathless tree –
> Him you chasten, that is He!

Please recall me to Mrs – Higginson –

Your scholar.

Manuscript: BPL (Higg 69). Ink.

Publication: *L* (1894) 318–319; *LL* 292–293; *L* (1931) 292–293.

On Higginson's "Decoration," see notes to letters no. 413 and 418. For the full story, with Higginson's poem quoted, see *Poems* (1955) 960–962.

504

To Mrs. James S. Cooper *about 1877*

Dear friend.

You thought of it.
Now dear, how delicate!

With peculiar love,

Your Stranger

MANUSCRIPT: YUL. Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 392; *L* (1931) 381.
Mrs. Cooper perhaps had remembered the anniversary of Edward Dickinson's death, 16 June; the date is conjectured from the handwriting. The signature may suggest that ED had not communicated with Mrs. Cooper since the previous summer (see letter no. 469).

505

To Samuel Bowles *about 1877*

Wednesday.

Dear Mr. Bowles' Note, of itself a Blossom, came only Tonight.
I am glad it lingered, for each was all the Heart could hold.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 221; *LL* 284; *L* (1931) 207.
The date is conjectured from the handwriting. The message acknowledges receipt of flowers sent perhaps, as Bowles tried annually to remember to do, during the week of the anniversary of her father's death. The flowers had arrived before his note. In 1877 the anniversary date, 16 June, fell on Saturday.

506

To Mrs. Jonathan L. Jenkins *20 June 1877*

You deserved a Tiding – before – dear –
Your little punctualities are generous and precious.
Vinnie rode last Twilight – with Austin and the Baby, but the

latter cried for the Moon, which saddened their Trip. He is an ardent Jockey, for so old a man, and his piercing cries of "Go Cadgie," when they leave him behind, rend the neighborhood.

There is circus here, and Farmers' Commencement, and Boys and Girls from Tripoli, and Governors and swords, parade the Summer Streets. They lean upon the Fence that guards the quiet Church Ground, and jar the Grass, now warm and soft as a Tropic Nest.

Many people call, and wish for you with tears, and Vinnie beats her wings like a maddened Bird, whose Home has been invaded.

So much has been Sorrow, that to fall asleep in Tennyson's Verse, seems almost a Pillow. "To where beyond these voices there is peace." I hope you are each safe. It is homeless without you, and we think of others possessing you with the throe of Othello.

Mother gives her love – Maggie pleads her own. Austin smiles when you mention him. He told me that one of the fine Nights – the Tenants of your House sat in the Door together, and he remarked to Sue – "Those are [not] for whom I built that Parsonage."

Daisies and Ferns are with us, and he whose Meadow they magnify, is always linked with you.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Sister Mary James. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 374–375, in part; *L* (1931) 365, in part; *FN* 129–130, entire.

On 20 June, Van Amburgh's Menagerie exhibited in Amherst, and the Agricultural College held its commencement. The quotation from Tennyson, in the third from the last paragraph, is the concluding line of "Guinevere" in *The Idylls of the King*.

Among ED's prose fragments (AC – pencil) is a draft of the comment about Gilbert:

> He is an ardent Jockey for so old a man and his piercing cries of go cadgie when they leave him behind – rend the neighborhood –

On the verso is the sentence:

> I feel Barefoot all over as the Boys say –

Both fragments are published in *NEQ* XXVIII (1955) 300.

507

To Mrs. Julius H. Seelye *late June 1877*

My dear Mrs Seelye –

Let me congratulate not you, but Ourselves.

E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: Colby College. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *Colby Library Quarterly* (June 1946) 240.

Seelye was inaugurated as president of Amherst College on 27 June 1877.

508

To Mrs. Julius H. Seelye *about 1877*

Dead friend –

I requite the celestial suggestion with Blossoms resembling it, and ask with your own timidity, "Will they intrude"?

E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: Colby College. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *Colby Library Quarterly* (June 1946) 240.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. Mrs. Seelye may have answered the foregoing note by sending flowers, which ED here acknowledges in kind.

509

To Mrs. James S. Cooper *about 1877*

"My Country, 'tis of thee," has always meant the Woods – to me –
"Sweet Land of Liberty," I trust is your own –

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 393; *L* (1931) 382.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. This note, like a similar one written in 1876 (no. 468), may have been sent on the Fourth of July.

510

To Mrs. James S. Cooper *about 1877*

How strange that Nature does not knock, and yet does not intrude!

MANUSCRIPT: Clark. Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 395; *LL* 334; *L* (1931) 384.
The handwriting is the only clue to the date. The note probably accompanied flowers.

511

To Edward (Ned) Dickinson *July 1877*

Dear Ned –

You know I never liked you in those Yellow Jackets.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 83). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *AM* CXV (1915) 37; *LL* 60.
An item in the *Springfield Republican*, 19 July 1877, reported that Ned had been stung by a hornet on the day preceding.

512

To Mrs. T. W. Higginson *summer 1877*

Dear friend

I send you a flower from my garden – Though it die in reaching you, you will know it lived, when it left my hand –

Hamlet wavered for all of us –

———

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 91). Ink. Envelope addressed: Mrs Higginson.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 305.
The flower was a cape jasmine (see letter no. 513).

513

To T. W. Higginson *August 1877*

Dear friend –

The flower was Jasmin. I am glad if it pleased your friend. It is next dearest to Daphne – except Wild flowers – those are dearer – I have a friend in Dresden, who thinks the love of the Field a misplaced affection – and says he will send me a Meadow that is better than Summer's. If he does, I will send it to you.

I have read nothing of Tourguenéff's, but thank you for telling me – and will seek him immediately. I hoped you might show me something of your's – one of the "few Verses" – the "scarcely any," you called them. Could you be willing now? Reprove me if I longed too bold – but I wished nothing so much –

You asked me if I wrote now?

I have no other Playmate –

I send you a Gale, and an Epitaph – and a Word to a Friend, and a Blue Bird, for Mrs Higginson. Excuse them if they are untrue –

Since you cease to teach me, how could I improve?

Your Pupil.

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 73). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 320, in part; *LL* 293–294, in part; *L* (1931) 294–295, entire.

The poems, in the order ED names them, were: "It sounded as if the Streets were running," "She laid her docile Crescent down," "I have no Life but this," and "After all Birds have been investigated and laid aside." Higginson had evidently mentioned in the letter to which this replies that he was writing an article on Turgenev (1818–1883); his diary (HCL) records that he sent it to the *Atlantic Monthly* on 7 August, but it was never published. The Dresden friend has not been identified.

514

To Martha Gilbert Smith *summer 1877*

Dear Mattie –

I remember you were peculiarly interested in this little flower – As it never blossoms except in Winter, I think it became on your account.

I have talked with your little Girl, whose persistent resemblance to you is sweet to those who love you –

Love for yourself, Mattie, and tenderness for Sue –

Emily,

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 27). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 251.

Mattie and her nine-year-old daughter Elizabeth were visiting Sue. The flower is blooming out of season.

515

To Samuel Bowles *about 1877*

Dear friend.

Vinnie accidentally mentioned that you hesitated between the "Theophilus" and the "Junius."

Would you confer so sweet a favor as to accept that too, when you come again?

I went to the Room as soon as you left, to confirm your presence – recalling the Psalmist's sonnet to God, beginning

I have no Life but this –
To lead it here –
Nor any Death – but lest
Dispelled from there –
Nor tie to Earths to come –
Nor Action new
Except through this extent
The love of you.

It is strange that the most intangible thing is the most adhesive.

Your "Rascal."

I washed the Adjective.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 219–220; *LL* 267; *L* (1931) 205–206.

Gertrude M. Graves wrote "A Cousin's Memories of Emily Dickinson," *Boston Sunday Globe*, 12 January 1930, telling how Bowles once called upstairs to ED: "Emily, you wretch! No more of this nonsense! I've traveled

all the way from Springfield to see you. Come down at once." She is said to have complied and never have been more witty. The conclusion to this letter suggests that Bowles had said "You damned rascal."

516

To T. W. Higginson *September 1877*

With sorrow that the Joy is past, to make you happy first, distrustful of it's Duplicate in a hastening World.

Your scholar.

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 25). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 293.
ED probably first learned about the death, 2 September 1877, of Mary Channing Higginson from a newspaper report. The formality of the note may have impelled ED to write the letter that follows soon after.

517

To T. W. Higginson *September 1877*

Dear friend.

If I could help you?

Perhaps she does not go so far
As you who stay – suppose –
Perhaps comes closer, for the lapse
Of her corporeal clothes –

Did she know she was leaving you? The Wilderness is new – to you. Master, let me lead you.

———

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 93). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 308.
A variant of the quatrain is in letter no. 518. Higginson's reply to this and the letter preceding elicited a response (see no. 519).

518

To Harriet and Martha Dickinson *about 1877?*

Dear friends

You are very kind to have wished for me, and I think it sweet, but accustomed to all through Father, they remind me too deeply of him for Peace. You, too, have been lessened. Let us remember together.

Perhaps they do not go so far
As we who stay, suppose
Perhaps come closer, for the lapse
Of their corporeal clothes.

It may be, know so certainly
How short we have to fear,
That comprehension antedates,
And estimates us there.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Laramore. Ink. Unpublished.

The former owner of the manuscript, Mr. Wallace H. Keep, thought that it had been sent to his aunts in the fall of 1876. The date 1877 is conjectured because a worksheet draft of the poem (AC) is in the handwriting of that year, and because a variant of the first stanza is incorporated in letter no. 517, sent to Higginson in September 1877. Harriet Dickinson was present at a Dickinson family reunion in 1883 (see letter no. 861), and the tone of this letter suggests that she and her sister may have been present at a similar gathering earlier; if so, "they" refers to relatives. The father of Harriet and Martha Dickinson, the Reverend Baxter Dickinson, had died in Brooklyn, 7 December 1875.

519

To T. W. Higginson *September 1877*

Dear friend.

We must be less than Death, to be lessened by it – for nothing is irrevocable but ourselves. I am glad you are better. I had feared to follow you, lest you would rather be lonely, which is the will of sorrow – but the Papers had spoken of you with affectionate deference,

and to know you were deeply remembered, might not too intrude. To be human is more than to be divine, for when Christ was divine, he was uncontented till he had been human.

I remember nothing so strong as to see you –

I hope you may come –

Thank you for telling me of your friend.

I had wanted to know –

She reminded me of Thermopylae – Did she suffer – except to leave you? That was perhaps the sum of Death – For the Hand I was never permitted to take, I enclose my own, and am tenderly

Her's –

Shall I keep the Paragraph, or is it too sacred?

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 86). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 326, in part; *LL* 305, in part; *L* (1931) 308, entire.

Higginson had replied to the query in ED's last letter to him, evidently enclosing an obituary notice, perhaps from the *Boston Evening Traveller* for 6 September, since a copy of the notice is in his notebook of 1877.

ED associated *Thermopylae* with uncomplaining bravery in the face of certain death (see letter no. 906). See also Prose Fragment 35.

520

To Jonathan L. Jenkins *September 1877*

Dear Mr and Mrs Pastor.

Mrs Holland pleased us and grieved us, by telling us your Triumphs.

We want you to conquer, but we want you to conquer here –

"Marathon" is me. Is there nothing but Glow – in the new Horizon?

You see we keep a jealous Heart – That is Love's Alloy –

Vinnie is full of Wrath, and vicious as Saul – toward the Holy Ghost, in whatever form. I heard her declaiming the other night, to a Foe that called – and sent Maggie to part them – Vinnie lives on the hope that you will return – Is it quite fictitious?

You are gone too long –

The Red Leaves take the Green Leaves place, and the Landscape yields. We go to sleep with the Peach in our Hands and wake with the Stone, but the Stone is the pledge of Summers to come –

Love for each of you, always, and if there are Lands longer than "Always," Love also for those –

These are Sticks of Rowen for your Stove.

It was chopped by Bees, and Butterflies piled it, Saturday Afternoons.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 37). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 372–373; *L* (1931) 363; *FN* 137.

The Hollands, returning from Alexandria Bay at the end of August, stopped first in Pittsfield, then in Amherst. The letter enclosed a few stalks of hay tied with a white ribbon.

521

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *September 1877*

I miss my little Sanctuary and her redeeming ways. A Savior in a Nut, is sweeter to the grasp than ponderous Prospectives.

Come again, and go not – which when a faithful invitation, is the sweetest known!

Mother pines for you, and says you were "so social." Mother misses power to ramble to her Neighbors – and the stale inflation of the minor News.

I wish the Sky and she had been better friends, for that is "sociability" that is fine and deathless.

How precious Thought and Speech are! "A present so divine," was in a Hymn they used to sing when I went to Church.

Vinnie talks of you –

Your cheerful view of Woe remodeled her's, I think – and Maggie deems you a Mistress most to be desired.

You see each looks at you through her specific Vista.

There is not yet Frost, and Vinnie's Garden from the Door looks like a Pond, with Sunset on it.

Bathing in that heals her.

How simple is Bethesda!

Love to your World – or Worlds.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 43). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 117.

This letter probably was written soon after the preceding. No hymn in collections ED was likely to know contains the phrase "A present (or presence) so divine." Perhaps she was trying to recall lines from the last stanza of Watts's "When I survey the wondrous cross:"

> Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> That were a present far too small;
> Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my soul, my life, my all.

522

To T. W. Higginson *early autumn 1877*

Dear friend,

I think of you so wholly that I cannot resist to write again, to ask if you are safe?

Danger is not at first, for then we are unconscious, but in the after – slower – Days –

Do not try to be saved – but let Redemption find you – as it certainly will – Love is it's own rescue, for we – at our supremest, are but it's trembling Emblems –

Your scholar –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 103). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (October, 1891) 450; *L* (1894) 326–327; *LL* 305–306; *L* (1931) 308–309.

Higginson's annotation on the letter reads: "(Newport) Sept 1877 Written to me after a bereavement."

523

To Richard H. Mather *November 1877*

Dear friend,

The few words of Lowell's seemed true to me – I hope you have felt like reading them – That the Divine has been human is at first an unheeded solace, but it shelters without our consent – To have

lived is a Bliss so powerful – we must die – to adjust it – but when you have strength to remember that Dying dispels nothing which was firm before, you have avenged sorrow –

E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: Mather. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *Scribner's Magazine* XCV (April 1934) 290.

On the outer fold Mather wrote: "Miss E. Dickinson/Nov. 9th 1877." His first wife, Elizabeth Carmichael Mather, died, 28 October 1877. Evidently she had sent some lines by Lowell to him at the time of Mrs. Mather's death.

524

To Maria Whitney *December 1877?*

Vinnie and her sister thank Miss Whitney for the delicate kindness, and remember her with peculiar love these acuter days. . . .

I fear we think too lightly of the gift of mortality, which, too gigantic to comprehend, certainly cannot be estimated.

E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 336; *L* (1931) 325.

The date is conjectural. This is the earliest known letter to Maria Whitney, and the formal signature implies that the acquaintance, initiated presumably either by the Bowleses or by Austin and Sue, began not long before the "acuter days" of the severe illness of Samuel Bowles, in early December. At that time Miss Whitney was making trips from Northampton to Springfield two or three times a week. Perhaps she had delivered some message from Bowles.

525

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *December 1877*

I always feel that the Minutest Effort of the dear Eyes, demands a peculiarly immediate reply – and internally it receives it, but time to say we are sorry, is sometimes withheld –

Wrenched from my usual Route by Vinnie's singular illness – and

Mother's additional despair – I have felt like a troubled Top, that spun without reprieve. Vinnie's relief is slow – She has borne more than she could, as you and I know more of, than her Physician does –

Torture for worthless sakes is equally Torture –

I shall try superhumanly to save her, and believe I shall, but she has been too lacerated to revive immediately.

Mrs Lord – so often with us – has fled – as you know – Dear Mr Bowles is hesitating – God help him decide on the Mortal Side!

This is Night – now – but we are not dreaming. Hold fast to your Home, for the Darling's stealthy momentum makes each moment – Fear –

I enclose a Note, which if you would lift as far as Philadelphia, if it did not tire your Arms – would please me so much.

Would the Doctor be willing to address it? Ask him, with my love.

Maggie remembers you with fondness – and Mother gives her love – Vinnie longs for you.

Is not the distinction of Affection, almost Realm enough?

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 44). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 118–119.

Mrs. Holland's eyesight was seriously impaired after her operation in 1872 (see letter no. 377), and many letters from ED allude to it in this manner. Vinnie's illness may also be inferred from letter no. 483. Mrs. Otis P. Lord died on 10 December. The letter enclosed for Dr. Holland to address and forward to Philadelphia was presumably intended for Charles Wadsworth.

526

To Edward (Ned) Dickinson — *Christmas 1877*

Santa Claus' Bridge blew off, obliging him to be frugal –
Otherwise, he is your boundless Aunt.

———

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 87). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 250.

The Northampton bridge had blown away, 14 June. The note in *FF* says the reference is to the Sunderland bridge, of which the Dickinsons were stockholders.

527

To Mrs. George Cutler *about 1877*

Blossoms are so peculiarly consecrated – that there is no Language sufficiently sanctifying to indorse them, but if a delighted Gratitude is not too undevout, Mrs Cutler . . .

MANUSCRIPT: Jones Library. Ink. Unpublished. The conclusion is missing, for the page is torn.

George Cutler and his brother William were prosperous Amherst merchants (see Appendix 1).

528

To Mrs. Edward Tuckerman *about 1877*

Dear friend.

Accept my timid happiness. No Joy can be in vain, but adds to some bright total, whose Dwelling is unknown –

The immortality of Flowers must enrich our own, and we certainly should resent a Redemption that excluded them –

Was not the "Breath of fragrance" designed for your cheek solely?

The fear that it was – crimsons my own – though to divide it's Heaven is Heaven's highest Half.

E. Dickinson –

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink. This note probably enclosed a poem.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 381; *L* (1931) 371.

Mrs. Tuckerman has sent ED half a bouquet that had been sent to her. A first rough pencil draft of part of the letter survives (AC):

> Accept my timid happiness – no Joy can be in
> vain but adds to some bright (sweet) [?]
> whose dwelling

529

To Mrs. James S. Cooper *about 1877*

Dear friend.

Maggie was taking you a flower as you were going out.

Please accept the design, and bewail the flower, that sank of chagrin last evening.

E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 170). Ink. Addressed on the fold: Mrs. Cooper.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 394; *LL* 323; *L* (1931) 383.

A note in the Dickinson collection at Amherst College, signed "A. I. C." (Abigail Ingersoll Cooper), reads:

> It may be that the flower faded from conscious failure in its mission – but the remembrance of the gentle kindly thought which suggested the gift, will abide with me in perpetual freshness –

The note was preserved because ED used the back of it to set down in rough draft the poem "It was a quiet seeming Day."

530

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson — *about 1877*

But Susan is a Stranger yet –
The Ones who cite her most
Have never scaled her Haunted House
Nor compromised her Ghost –

To pity those who know her not
Is helped by the regret
That those who know her know her less
The nearer her they get –

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 62). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 260; *Poems* (1955) 971.

This and the following letter-poem for Susan Dickinson, written about the same time, are dated by handwriting only.

531

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson — *about 1877*

To own a Susan of my own
Is of itself a Bliss –
Whatever Realm I forfeit, Lord,
Continue me in this!

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 4). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 243; *Poems* (1955) 972.

532

To Mrs. Samuel Bowles *about 16 January 1878*

To remember our own Mr Bowles is all we can do.
With grief it is done, so warmly and long, it can never be new.
Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: *AC*. Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 223; *LL* 286; *L* (1931) 208.
These "broken words" (see letter no. 536) were probably written on the day that Samuel Bowles died, 16 January 1878. Mrs. Bowles answered the note soon after, eliciting ED's reply in the letter referred to above. On this letter, see the note to letter no. 438.

533

To T. W. Higginson *19 January 1878*

Dear friend,

I felt it shelter to speak to you.

My Brother and Sister are with Mr Bowles, who is buried this afternoon.

The last song that I heard – that was since the Birds – was "He leadeth me – he leadeth me – yea, though I walk." Then the voices stooped – the arch was so low –

———

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 105). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *AM* LXVIII (October 1891) 455; *L* (1894) 327; *LL* 306; *L* (1931) 309.
On 11 February 1877 Nora Green sang the Twenty-Third Psalm in church for Mr. Jenkins's farewell sermon. Lavinia heard her. ED was so impressed by the account that she asked to hear it. With her brother and

sister, Miss Green sang it in the Dickinson drawingroom while ED and Lavinia listened upstairs. ED came down and greeted them afterward: as reported by Clara Bellinger Green, *Bookman* LX (November 1924) 291.

534

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *January 1878*

Sister spoke of Springfield – The beginning of "Always" is more dreadful than the close – for that is sustained by flickering identity –

His nature was Future –
He had not yet lived –
David's route was simple – "I shall go to him" –

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 82). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 254.
This note was written to Sue upon her return from the funeral of Samuel Bowles. After the death of David's son, David said (2 Samuel 12.23): "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

535

To Mrs Henry Hills *January 1878*

Dear Mr and Mrs Hills,

It is a little more than three years since you tried to help us bid Father Good-Night, which was so impossible that it has never become less so –

Now we have given our Mr Bowles – to the deep Stranger –

To seek to be nobler for their sakes, is all that remains – and our only Plot for discovering them –

I want to thank you for the kindness, so very sweet and large – and ask if you are well – and hope you may remain. Heaven is so presuming that we must hide our Gems.

I am glad you care so much for Austin – He will need you more – and trust you may include us all in your fond number.

Nor do we forget the lovely assault between the two Years, and Trust each fair and noble thing may befall you both –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Skillings. Unpublished.

Enclosed in the same envelope is a letter from Lavinia, dated: January 23. Both are letters of thanks for Christmas remembrances. In the same envelope is a penciled note which may or may not have been sent at the same time:

535A

"Was it from Heaven, or of Men?"

Lovingly,
Emily.

536

To Mrs. Samuel Bowles *early 1878*

I hasten to you, Mary, because no moment must be lost when a heart is breaking, for though it broke so long, each time is newer than the last, if it broke truly. To be willing that I should speak to you was so generous, dear.

Sorrow almost resents love, it is so inflamed.

I am glad if the broken words helped you. I had not hoped so much, I felt so faint in uttering them, thinking of your great pain. Love makes us "heavenly" without our trying in the least. 'Tis easier than a Saviour – it does not stay on high and call us to its distance; its low "Come unto me" begins in every place. It makes but one mistake, it tells us it is "rest" – perhaps its toil is rest, but what we have not known we shall know again, that divine "again" for which we are all breathless.

I am glad you "work." Work is a bleak redeemer, but it does redeem; it tires the flesh so that can't tease the spirit.

Dear "Mr. Sam" is very near, these midwinter days. When purples come on Pelham, in the afternoon we say "Mr. Bowles's colors." I spoke to him once of his Gem chapter, and the beautiful eyes rose till they were out of reach of mine, in some hallowed fathom.

Not that he goes – we love him more
Who led us while he stayed.
Beyond earth's trafficking frontier,
For what he moved, he made.

Mother is timid and feeble, but we keep her with us. She thanks you for remembering her, and never forgets you. . . . Your sweet "and left me all alone," consecrates your lips.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 223–224; *LL* 314–315; *L* (1931) 209–210.
See the note to letter no. 532. Mr. Bowles's "Gem chapter" may have been Revelation 21, of which ED herself was particularly fond.

537

To Maria Whitney *early 1878*

Dear friend,

I have thought of you often since the darkness, – though we cannot assist another's night. I have hoped you were saved. That he has received Immortality who so often conferred it, invests it with a more sudden charm. . . .

I hope you have the power of hope, and that every bliss we know or guess hourly befalls you.

E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 336; *L* (1931) 325.
ED knew that Bowles's death was poignantly felt by Maria Whitney. This and the three following extracts, dated by Mrs. Todd "1878," evidently were written about the same time. See Prose Fragment 37.

538

To Maria Whitney *early 1878?*

. . . To relieve the irreparable degrades it.
Brabantio's resignation is the only one – "I here do give thee that

with all my heart, which, but thou hast already, with all my heart I would keep from thee."

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 336; *LL* 311; *L* (1931) 325.
The death of Bowles probably stimulated a correspondence between ED and Maria Whitney. The quotation from *Othello* (I, iii, 193–195) is, in fact, verbatim. (See letter no. 622.)

539

To Maria Whitney *early 1878?*

. . . The crucifix requires no glove.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 337; *LL* 312; *L* (1931) 326.

540

To Maria Whitney *early 1878?*

Intrusiveness of flowers is brooked by even troubled hearts.
They enter and then knock – then chide their ruthless sweetness, and then remain forgiven.
May these molest as fondly!

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 338; *LL* 312; *L* (1931) 327.
Mrs. Todd placed this letter among those that she dated 1878.

541

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1878*

Where we owe but a little, we pay.
Where we owe so much it defies Money, we are blandly insolvent.

Adulation is inexpensive except to him who accepts it.
It has cost him – Himself.

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 93). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *LL* 62, in part; *FF* 241, in part.
The handwriting confirms the inference that this note was written after the death of Samuel Bowles.

542

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *early 1878*

Your sweet Face alighted in the Rain, with it's Smile unharmed – All was there but Breath, and even that seemed optional – it was so confiding. Thank you for coming Home –

"Home – sweet Home" – Austin's Baby sings – "there is no place like Home – 'tis too – over to Aunt Vinnie's."

Thank you for Dr Gray's Opinion – that is peace – to us. I am sorry your Doctor is not well. I fear he has "improved" too many "shining Hours."

Give my love to him, and tell him the "Bee" is a reckless Guide. Dear Mr Bowles found out too late, that Vitality costs itself.

How mournful without him! I often heard the Students sing – delicious Summer nights, "I've seen around me fall – like Leaves in wintry weather" – This was what they meant –

You kindly ask for Mother's health.

It is tranquil, though trifling. She reads a little – sleeps much – chats – perhaps – most of all – about nothing momentous, but things vital to her – and reminds one of Hawthorne's blameless Ship – that forgot the Port –

Vinnie is better – though sober – Maggie – invulnerable, and loyal to you – Ned has brought his Hens to live in our Hen House, which adds to our little Group.

Three is a scant Assembly, but Love makes "One to carry –" as the Children say –

That is all of my Learning that I recall.

Tenderly,

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 45). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *LH* 121–122.

The letter acknowledges a photograph ED had received from Mrs. Holland. Dr. Holland spoke at Bowles's funeral; he was not well at the time this letter was written. "Hawthorne's blameless Ship" refers not to a story by Hawthorne, but to a Salem legend of a ship that haunted the port but never came to land.

543

To Mrs. James S. Cooper *early 1878*

The Keeper of Golden Flowers need have no fear of the "Silver Bill."

An Indies in the Hand, at all times fortifying, is peculiarly so – perhaps – today. Midas was a Rogue –

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 393; *LL* 323; *L* (1931) 382.

Congress passed the silver bill in February. (Similar bills had been passed in 1873 and 1875, but the writing fits this year.)

544

To Dr. J. G. Holland *early 1878*

Dear Doctor,

We rejoice in your repaired health, though it grieves us that repairs should be necessary in a Structure so able – yet when we recall that the "Soul's poor Cottage, battered and dismayed, lets in new light through chinks that time has made," your predicament becomes one of congratulation.

You seem to have reared Fames as rapidly as Houses, and we trust, of more lasting ingredient, though the Abode without a Nail, has its consternations.

We hope that you are happy so far as Peace is possible, to Mortal and immortal Life – for those ways "Madness lies."

"About" *which* "Ranks the Sunbeams play," is a touching question.

But I intrude on Sunset, and Father and Mr Bowles.

These held their Wick above the West –
Till when the Red declined –
Or how the Amber aided it –
Defied to be defined –

Then waned without disparagement
In a disembling Hue
That would not let the Eye decide
Did it abide or no –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 46). Ink.
PUBLICATION: *LH* 122–123.

The line quoted from Edmund Waller reads: "The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decayed." ED has marginally entered *decayed*. For the same quoted lines, see letter no. 888. The opening lines of a Reginald Heber poem are: "I see them on their winding way,/Above their ranks the moonbeams play." The phrase quoted in the third paragraph is from *King Lear* III, iv, 21.

545

To Mrs. Edward Tuckerman *about March 1878?*

Vinnie says the dear friend would like the rule. We have no statutes here, but each does as it will, which is the sweetest jurisprudence.

With it, I enclose Love's "remainder biscuit," somewhat scorched perhaps in baking, but "Love's oven is warm." Forgive the base proportions.

The fairer ones were borne away. The canna was a privilege, the little box a bliss, and the blossoms so real that a fly waylaid them, but I lured him away.

Again receive the love which comes without aspect, and without herald goes.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 380–381; *LL* 297; *L* (1931) 370–371.

A letter of 1 March from Fannie Norcross to Vinnie (photostat in AC)

says: "Now I will give you the caramel rule." The phrase "remainder biscuit" is from *As You Like It*, II, vii, 39–40: "Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit/After a voyage;" (see also letter no. 882).

546

To T. W. Higginson *March 1878*

Dear friend,

The Hope of seeing you was so sweet and serious – that seeing this – by the Papers, I fear it has failed. I hope I in no way spoke less reverently than I felt – of a Pleasure so priceless –

Your Pupil –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 100). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 310.
On 11 March the *Springfield Republican* mentions that Higginson had spent a fortnight in South Carolina.

547

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *about March 1878*

Dear Sister.

I take Mrs Browning's little Basket to bring the note to you – and when you find it is not her, you will be disappointed, but there is many a discipline before we obtain Heaven – Your little Note protected, as it always does, and the "Whips of Time" felt a long way off.

Your little Trip still lingers, for is not all petite you do – you are such a Linnet?

Vinnie was much elated by your rogueries. She thinks you are stealthy as Talleyrand –

We learn of you in the Papers and of your new House, of which it is said there will be a Portrait – "so I shall see it in just three Days," though I would rather see it's vital inhabitants.

I gave your words to Ned – who bowed and seemed much raised —

Baby does all the errands now – and I enclose a Circular, setting forth his wants.

To see the little Missionary starting with his Basket, would warm the chillest Heart.

I know you will do what I ask you, and so I only thank you, and make no outer remarks.

Lovingly,

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 47). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 124–125.

The "Portrait" was an article in the *Springfield Republican* of some length, in the 24 July issue, describing the Hollands' new house in the Thousand Islands. The last sentence evidently asks Mrs. Holland to forward an enclosure, probably a letter intended for Dr. Wadsworth. "Whips of Time" paraphrases Hamlet's "whips and scorns of time" (III, i, 70). The second quotation paraphrases the opening line of Browning's "In Three Days": "So, I shall see her in three days." Mrs. Ward conjectures that "Mrs Browning's little Basket" means that ED folded the letter in a circular notice or the wrapping from a copy of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Earlier Poems*, first published in the United States in March 1878.

548

To Edward (Ned) Dickinson *spring 1878*

But were'nt you a little premature in laying aside your "Cutter"?

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 84). Pencil. Addressed: Ned. Unpublished.

This and the following note to Ned seem to have been written about the same time, this one after a spring snowstorm. The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

549

To Edward (Ned) Dickinson *spring 1878*

Omit to return Box–
Omit to know you received Box–

"Brooks of Sheffield."

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 39). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *AM* CXV (1915) 39; *LL* 61.

Mrs. Bianchi says the box contained the year's first maple sugar. The character Brooks of Sheffield, in *David Copperfield*, designated one who remained nameless (see also letters no. 204 and 820).

550

To Mrs. J. Howard Sweetser *spring 1878*

Sweet Mrs Nellie comes with the Robins.

Would she remain with the Robins April would need no Codicil, but Mrs Nellie has Wings –

Hours – have Wings –

Riches – have Wings –

Wings are a mournful perquisite –

A Society for the Suppression of Wings would protect us all.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Rosenbach 1170/18 (24). Pencil. Addressed on the fold: Mrs Nellie.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 407; *L* (1931) 397; in part and altered, for it was reconstructed from memory.

The date, conjectured from the handwriting, is confirmed by the recollection of a daughter (Todd papers. AC) that the occasion was a visit in Amherst five years before the Sweetsers inherited the Amherst home of Mr. Sweetser's parents.

551

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *spring 1878*

I thought that "Birnam Wood" had "come to Dunsinane." Where did you pick arbutus? In Broadway, I suppose. They say that God is everywhere, and yet we always think of Him as somewhat of a recluse. . . It is hard not to hear again that vital "Sam is coming" — though if grief is a test of a priceless life, he is compensated. He was not ambitious for redemption – that was why it is his. "To him that hath, shall be given." Were it not for the eyes, we would know of you oftener. Have they no remorse for their selfishness? "This tabernacle" is a blissful trial, but the bliss predominates.

I suppose you will play in the water at Alexandria Bay, as the baby does at the tub in the drive. . . Speak to us when your eyes can spare you, and "keep us, at home, or by the way," as the clergyman says, when he folds the church till another Sabbath.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 181–182; *L* (1931) 174–175; *LH* 125–126.
It had been Bowles's custom to make a call on his Amherst friends about blossom time.

552

To Mrs. Thomas P. Field *about 1878*

Expulsion from Eden grows indistinct in the presence of flowers so blissful, and with no disrespect to Genesis, Paradise remains.

Beaconsfield says "the time has now come when it must be decided forever, who possesses the great gates to India."

I think it must be my neighbor.

With delicate gratitude,

E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 421; *LL* 365; *L* (1931) 409–410.
The note was written to acknowledge a gift of flowers. The Fields were recent arrivals in Amherst. Following the Russo-Turkish war, Great Britain negotiated for occupation of Cyprus, and moved Indian troops to Malta.

553

To T. W. Higginson *early June 1878*

Dear friend.

When you wrote you would come in November, it would please me it were November then – but the time has moved – You went with the coming of the Birds – they will go with your coming – but to see you is so much sweeter than Birds, I could excuse the spring.

With the bloom of the flower your friend loved, I have wished for her, but God cannot discontinue himself.

Mr Bowles was not willing to die.

When you have lost a friend, Master, you remember you could not begin again, because there was no World. I have thought of you often since the Darkness – though we cannot assist another's Night –

I have hoped you were saved –

That those have immortality with whom we talked about it, makes it no more mighty – but perhaps more sudden –

How brittle are the Piers
On which our Faith doth tread –
No Bridge below doth totter so –
Yet none hath such a Crowd.

It is as old as God –
Indeed – 'twas built by him –
He sent his Son to test the Plank,
And he pronounced it firm.

I hope you have been well. I hope your rambles have been sweet and your reveries spacious – To have seen Stratford on Avon – and the Dresden Madonna, must be almost Peace –

And perhaps you have spoken with George Eliot. Will you "tell me about it"? Will you come in November, and will November come – or is this the Hope that opens and shuts, like the eye of the Wax Doll?

Your Scholar –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 106). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 327–328; *LL* 306–307; *L* (1931) 309–310.

Higginson sailed for Europe during the spring, and had evidently written ED that he expected to return in November. He was in fact home by late October. This letter must have been sent to some address abroad. Its conclusion is a variant of that in the letter which follows.

A variant of the fourth paragraph is among the prose fragments (AC – pencil):

If ever you lost a friend – Master – You remember you could not begin again because there was no world –
A breathless Death is not so cold as a Death that breathes

The fragment is published in *NEQ* XVIII (1955) 298. For another finished draft of the conclusion of the second paragraph, see Prose Fragment 34.

554

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *mid-June 1878*

Susan knows she is a Siren – and that at a word from her, Emily would forfeit Righteousness – Please excuse the grossness of this morning – I was for a moment disarmed – This is the World that opens and shuts, like the Eye of the Wax Doll –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 11). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *LL* 62, in part.
The year is conjectured from the handwriting, and the month is inferred from the context. In mid-May, 1878, Sue spent a month visiting in the Midwest. She appears to have paid an unexpected morning call on her return. The same conclusion is used in the letter preceding, to Higginson.

555

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *June 1878*

I thought it was you, little Chocolate Sister – but Vinnie demurred – and Vinnie decides. I said "let me thank her conditionally" – "No" – said Vinnie – "'twould be remorse – provided it were not her –" and so we guessed and sighed and nibbled and propounded – and felt how base we were – until the Doctor's note.

The Bonbons were delightful, but better than Bonbons was the love – for that is the basis of Bonbons. And in all the confusion to think of us – Loyal little Sister – the Bird going South – is not so mindful of the Birds behind. To never forget you – is all we can –

That is how faint a Stipend –

The Doctor's Pun was happy – How lovely are the wiles of Words!

We thought you cherished Bryant, and spoke of you immediately when we heard his fate – if Immortality *be* Fate.

Dear friends – we cannot believe for each other. I suppose there are depths in every Consciousness, from which we cannot rescue ourselves – to which none can go with us – which represent to us Mortally – the Adventure of Death –

How unspeakably sweet and solemn – that whatever await us of Doom or Home, we are mentally permanent.

"It is finished" can never be said of us.

I am glad of your bright Home—

I hope you are well—you did not tell me—Thank you peculiarly sweetly—With grief for the eyes only, happy for your happiness,

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 49). Ink.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 127.

William Cullen Bryant, one of Dr. Holland's close literary friends, died, 12 June. The Hollands were spending the first summer in their new house at Alexandria Bay.

556

To Mrs. Edward Tuckerman *June 1878*

Is it that words are suddenly small or that we are suddenly large, that they cease to suffice us, to thank a friend?

Perhaps it is chiefly both.

———

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 381; *LL* 313; *L* (1931) 371.

The date is that supplied Mrs. Todd by Mrs. Tuckerman, and is confirmed by the handwriting.

557

To Mrs. Henry Hills *summer 1878*

Dear friend,

Your memory of others, among your almost superhuman cares, is so astonishing that I cannot refrain from surprise and love.

How near this suffering Summer are the divine words "There is a World elsewhere."

E—

MANUSCRIPT: Jones Library. Pencil. Envelope addressed: Mrs Henry Hills. Unpublished.

Henry Hills failed in business during the summer of 1878, and the announcement was made on 11 July. Austin took over the business to save his friend from ruin. No passage in scripture exactly matches ED's quotation. Perhaps she had in mind Romans 8.18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

558

To Mrs. Edward Tuckermann *July 1878*

Would it be prudent to subject an apparitional interview to a grosser test? The Bible portentously says "that which is Spirit is Spirit."

Go not too near a House of Rose –
The depredation of a Breeze
Or inundation of a Dew
Alarm it's walls away –
Nor try to tie the Butterfly,
Nor climb the Bars of Ecstasy,
In insecurity to lie
Is Joy's insuring quality.

E. Dickinson –

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 382; *LL* 313; *L* (1931) 371–372, where it is dated "July, 1878," on Mrs. Tuckerman's authority.

The quotation is from John 3.6; "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (See letter no. 458.)

559

To Otis P. Lord *about 1878*

[*fair copy – first two pages only extant*]

My lovely Salem smiles at me. I seek his Face so often – but I have done with guises.

I confess that I love him – I rejoice that I love him – I thank the maker of Heaven and Earth – that gave him me to love – the exultation

floods me. I cannot find my channel – the Creek turns Sea – at thought of thee –

Will you punish me? "Involuntary Bankruptcy," how could that be Crime?

Incarcerate me in yourself – rosy penalty – threading with you this lovely maze, which is not Life or Death – though it has the intangibleness of one, and the flush of the other – waking for your sake on Day made magical with you before I went

[*rough draft of fair copy above*]

My lovely Salem smiles at me I seek his Face so often – but I am past disguises (have dropped –) (have done with guises –)

I confess that I love him – I rejoice that I love him – I thank the maker of Heaven and Earth that gave him me to love – the exultation floods me – I can not find my channel – The Creek turned Sea at thoughts of thee – will you punish it – [turn I] involuntary Bankruptcy as the Debtors say. Could that be a Crime – How could that be crime – Incarcerate me in yourself – that will punish me – Threading with you this lovely maze which is not Life or Death tho it has the intangibleness of one and the flush of the other waking for your sake on Day made magical with [before] you before I went to sleep – What pretty phrase – we went to sleep as if it were a country – let us make it one – we could (will) make it one, my native Land – my Darling come oh *be* a patriot now – Love is a patriot now Gave her life for its (its) country Has it meaning now – Oh nation of the soul thou hast thy freedom now

Manuscripts: AC. Both are in pencil.

Publication: *Revelation* 78–81, with facsimile.

The rough draft is on a discarded envelope addressed in Lord's hand: Miss Vinnie Dickinson,/Amherst/By Mr Cooper's Kindness. (James I. Cooper was Austin Dickinson's law partner.)

The letters, and drafts and fragments of letters, to Lord were found among ED's papers after her death, and given to Mrs. Todd by Austin Dickinson (*Revelation* 1–2). It would appear that ED and Lord in time came to make a practice of writing each other weekly – or intending to do so. The intimacy of the relationship continued until his death in 1884. This letter and the four that follow are in the handwriting of about 1878. They are here grouped, since no specific time of the year is indicated in the letters.

560

To Otis P. Lord *about 1878*

Ned and I were talking about God and Ned said "Aunt Emily – does Judge Lord belong to the Church"?

"I think not, Ned, technically."

"Why, I thought he was one of those Boston Fellers who thought it the respectable thing to do." "I think he does nothing ostensible – Ned." "Well – my Father says if there were another Judge in the Commonwealth like him, the practice of Law would amount to something." I told him I thought it probable – though recalling that I had never tried any case in your presence but my own, and that, with your sweet assistance – I was murmurless.

I wanted to fondle the Boy for the fervent words – but made the distinction. Dont you know you have taken my will away and I "know not where" you "have laid" it? Should I have curbed you sooner? "Spare the 'Nay' and spoil the child"?

Oh, my too beloved, save me from the idolatry which would crush us both –

"And very Sea – Mark of my utmost Sail" –

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. It is a fair copy.
PUBLICATION: *Revelation* 77–82.

561

To Otis P. Lord *about 1878*

To beg for the Letter when it is written, is bankrupt enough, but to beg for it when it is'nt, and the dear Donor is sauntering, mindless of it's worth, *that* is bankrupter.

Sweet One – to make the bright week noxious, that was once so gay, have you quite the warrant? Also, my Naughty one, too seraphic Naughty, who can sentence you? Certainly not my enamored Heart. Now my blissful Sophist, you that can make "Dont" "Do" – though forget that I told you so, [*part of two pages cut out*]

Perhaps, please, you are sinful? Though of power to make Perdition divine, who can punish you?

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Fair copy.
PUBLICATION: *Revelation* 82.

562

To Otis P. Lord *about 1878*

Dont you know you are happiest while I withhold and not confer – dont you know that "No" is the wildest word we consign to Language?

You do, for you know all things – [*top of sheet cut off*] . . . to lie so near your longing – to touch it as I passed, for I am but a restive sleeper and often should journey from your Arms through the happy night, but you will lift me back, wont you, for only there I ask to be – I say, if I felt the longing nearer – than in our dear past, perhaps I could not resist to bless it, but must, because it would be right

The "Stile" is God's – My Sweet One – for your great sake – not mine – I will not let you cross – but it is all your's, and when it is right I will lift the Bars, and lay you in the Moss – You showed me the word.

I hope it has no different guise when my fingers make it. It is Anguish I long conceal from you to let you leave me, hungry, but you ask the divine Crust and that would doom the Bread.

That unfrequented Flower
Embellish thee – (deserving be) [*sheet cut off*]

I was reading a little Book – because it broke my Heart I want it to break your's – Will you think that fair? I often have read it, but not before since loving you – I find that makes a difference – it makes a difference with all. Even the whistle of a Boy passing late at Night, or the Low [?] of a Bird – [*sheet cut away*] Satan" – but then what I have not heard is the sweet majority – the Bible says very roguishly, that the "wayfaring Man, though a Fool – need not err therein"; need the "wayfaring" Woman? Ask your throbbing Scripture.

It may surprise you I speak of God – I know him but a little, but Cupid taught Jehovah to many an untutored Mind – Witchcraft is wiser than we –

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *Revelation* 83, with the first page reproduced in facsimile.

In the next to last paragraph ED recalls Isaiah 35.8: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness . . . the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

563

To Otis P. Lord *about 1878*

Tuesday is a deeply depressing Day – it is not far enough from your dear note for the embryo of another to form, and yet what flights of Distance – and so I perish softly and spurn the Birds (spring) and spurn the Sun – with pathetic (dejected) malice – but when the Sun begins to turn the corner Thursday night – everything refreshes – the soft uplifting grows till by the time it is Sunday night, all my Life (Cheek) is Fever with nearness to your blissful words – (rippling words)

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil. Jotted on a discarded scrap of letter.
PUBLICATION: *Revelation* 94, with facsimile reproduction.
It is written on a scrap of letter from Maggie Maher.

564

To Jonathan L. Jenkins *August 1878*

There would have been no smile on Amherst's Face, had she believed her Clergyman's sweet wife to be suffering, but the Paper spoke so obligingly, we thought it an accident that endeared – rather than endangered – That Sorrow dare to touch the Loved is a mournful insult – we are all avenging it all the time, though as Lowell quotes from the Stranger "Live – live even to be unkind" –

It is hard to think of our "little Friend" as a Sufferer – we – peculiarly know how hard, through our suffering Mother – but the tiniest ones are the mightiest – The Wren will prevail –

Mother asked me last Sabbath "why Father did'nt come from Church," and ["] if Mr Jenkins preached"?

I told her he did and that Father had lingered to speak with him –

It was touching that harm should suggest "Amherst." "Bruised for our iniquities" I had almost feared – Amherst – tell her – suggests her – each of you – my Shepherd, and will – while will remains –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 38). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 373, in part; *L* (1931) 363–364, in part; *FN* 125, entire.

The *Springfield Republican* reported on Friday, 16 August, that on the previous day Mrs. Jenkins had been thrown from a carriage by a shying horse. Though intended as a note of condolence for Mrs. Jenkins, the letter is written to Mr. Jenkins. The quotation of Lowell's is from *Among My Books* (1870). In his essay on Dryden, Lowell quotes from Dryden's tragedy *Aurengzebe*: "Live still! oh live! live even to be unkind!" ED's reference to "stranger" evidently means someone outside the United States; in letter no. 315, Wordsworth is so designated. The scripture allusion is from Isaiah 53.5: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities . . ."

565

To Mrs. Edward Tuckerman *August 1878*

To see is perhaps never quite the sorcery that it is to surmise, though the obligation to enchantment is always binding –

It is sweet to recall that we need not retrench, as Magic is our most frugal Meal.

I fear you have much happiness because you spend so much. Would adding to it – take it away or is that a penurious question?

To cherish you is intuitive –

As we take nature, without permission, let us covet you –

———

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 382; *LL* 314; *L* (1931) 372.

Mrs. Tuckerman told Mrs. Todd that she received the note in August.

566

To Mrs. J. Howard Sweetser *about 1878*

Dear friend,

I fear you think your sweetness "fell among Thorns –" I have hoped for a moment in which to thank you, since your Parents returned – but have not obtained it, and must come with my Pencil – now – which will you forgive?

The Grapes were big and fresh, tasting like Emerald Dew – I know you picked them yourself!

How spacious must be the Heart that can include so many, and make no error of Love toward one – Thank you, dear, with Affection – and recall me to those closest to you – with sincerity –

Your beautiful Boy and Girls are part of the Summer's Picture, which is not yet mottled by the Snow. That no Flake of it fall on you or them – is a wish that would almost be a Prayer, were Emily not a Pagan –

MANUSCRIPT: Rosenbach 1170/18 (23). Pencil. Unpublished.

Of the three children, Nettie and Howard were respectively the ages of Mattie and Ned Dickinson. The quotation is from Matthew 13.7.

567

To Mrs. Samuel Bowles *late summer 1878*

Had you never spoken to any, dear, they would not upbraid you, but think of you more softly, as one who had suffered too much to speak. To forget you would be impossible, had we never seen you; for you were his for whom we moan while consciousness remains. As he was himself Eden, he is with Eden, for we cannot become what we were not.

I felt it sweet that you needed me — though but a simple shelter I will always last. I hope your boys and girls assist his dreadful absence, for sorrow does not stand so still on their flying hearts.

How fondly we hope they look like him – that his beautiful face may be abroad.

Was not his countenance on earth graphic as a spirit's? The time

will be long till you see him, dear, but it will be short, for have we not each our heart to dress – heavenly as his?

He is without doubt with my father. Thank you for thinking of him, and the sweet, last respect you so faithfully paid him.

Mother is growing better, though she cannot stand, and has not the power to raise her head for a glass of water. She thanks you for being sorry, and speaks of you with love. . . . Your timid "for his sake," recalls the sheltering passage, "for his sake who loved us, and gave himself to die for us."

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 224–225; *LL* 315–316; *L* (1931) 210.

Mrs. Dickinson fell and broke her hip in June. No passage in scripture exactly matches that which ED attempts to recall. Perhaps she had in mind Galatians 2.20: "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

568

To recipient unknown *about 1878*

Were the Statement "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," made in earthly Manuscript, were his Residence in the Universe, we should pursue the Writer till he explained it to us.

It is strange that the Astounding subjects are the only ones we pass unmoved.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *NEQ* XXVIII (1955) 312.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. This fair copy, bearing every mark of completion, may or may not have left ED's desk. Presumably it came into Mrs. Todd's possession in the 1890's. The scripture quotation is from 1 Corinthians 15.51.

569

To Mrs. James S. Cooper *about 1878*

Dear friend.

Mother thanks you through me, as she does not use her Hand for

writing. I hope the vicariousness may not impair the fervor. Mother is very fond of Flowers and of Recollection, that sweetest Flower.

Please accept her happiness, and our's, for causing her's –

E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Ink.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 393; *L* (1931) 382–383.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. Probably Mrs. Cooper had sent flowers to Mrs. Dickinson sometime during the summer, after Mrs. Dickinson was confined to her bed, in June, with a broken hip.

570

To Edward (Ned) Dickinson *about 1878*

Ned, with indignation.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 14). Pencil. Addressed on the fold: Ned.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 250.

Presumably the note accompanied some token of "indignation," though none has been identified. The date of this note and the following, also to Ned, is conjectured as about 1878 from the handwriting. There may or may not be a connection between them.

571

To Edward (Ned) Dickinson *about 1878*

Dear Ned,

You know that Pie you stole – well, this is that Pie's Brother –

Mother told me when I was a Boy, that I must "turn over a new Leaf" – I call that the Foliage Admonition –

Shall I commend it to you?

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 117). Pencil. The signature has been torn away.

PUBLICATION: *AM* CXV (1915) 37; *LL* 58.

If this note bears a relation to that above, it probably followed it. See also letter no. 580.

572

To Mrs. William A. Stearns *1878?*

Dear friends,

The seraphic shame generosity causes is perhaps its most heavenly result.

To make even Heaven more heavenly, is within the aim of us all.

I was much touched by the little fence dividing the devotions, though devotion should always wear a fence, to preempt its claim.

Why the full heart is speechless, is one of the great wherefores.

Emily, with love.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 378–379; *LL* 314; *L* (1931) 368–369.

Mrs. Todd dated this note 1878. The circumstances that prompted it have not been identified.

573

To Maria Whitney *late 1878*

Dear friend,

I had within a few days a lovely hour with Mr and Mrs Jackson of Colorado, who told me that love of Mr Bowles and longing for some trace of him, led them to his house, and to seek his wife. They found her, they said, a stricken woman, though not so ruthless as they feared. That of ties remaining, she spoke with peculiar love of a Miss Whitney of Northampton, whom she would soon visit, and almost thought of accompanying them as far as yourself.

To know that long fidelity in ungracious soil was not wholly squandered, might be sweet to you.

I hope that you are well, and in full receipt of the Great Spirit whose leaving life was leaving you.

Faithfully

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 327. The present text derives from a transcript (AC) made by Mrs. Todd when she saw the letter.

The Jacksons had been in Amherst for a few days, leaving there on

24 October. It is significant that ED received not only Mrs. Jackson but her husband, a total stranger. Such an act for ED this late in her life was unprecedented (see letters no 573c and 574). The second paragraph makes clear ED's awareness that Maria Whitney's devotion to Samuel Bowles had not always been appreciated.

ED's letters to Helen Jackson written during 1878 are missing, but the contents of them can be inferred from those Mrs. Jackson wrote ED (HCL). The first, dated Colorado Springs, 29 April 1878, asks for a poem to be included in a volume of the No Name series. The full story of Mrs. Jackson's effort to get it is told in *Poems* (1955) xxx–xxxiii, and begins with the following letter (unpublished), which returns a photograph of Gilbert.

573a

My dear friend,

My face was not "averted" in the least. It was only that I did not speak: and of my not speaking, I ought to be very much ashamed, and should be, if I had not got past being ashamed of my delinquencies in the matter of letter writing. But I assure you I have never forgotten that you kindly wrote one day, asking if all were well with me: and I have all along meant to write and say "yes," if no more.

All last summer and autumn I was very busy, in altering over and fitting up our cottage. I think to alter one house is equal to building ten! and to do any such work in Colorado is ten times harder than to do it any where else in the world. But now it is all done, and we are "settled" — (odd word that and does a good deal of double duty in the language) — I can hardly recollect the fatigues and discomforts which went before. It is a very picturesque and cozy little house, and I enjoy it unspeakably. I should like to see all my Eastern friends in it.

Would it be of any use to ask you once more for one or two of your poems, to come out in the volume of "no name" poetry which is to be published before long by Roberts Bros.? If you will give me permission I will copy them — sending them in my own handwriting — and promise never to tell any one, not even the publishers, whose the poems are. Could you not bear this much of publicity? only you and I would recognize the poems. I wish very much you would do

this — and I think you would have much amusement in seeing to whom the critics, those shrewd guessers would ascribe your verses.

I am hoping to come East with Mr. Jackson, before next winter: but we have no fixed plan — and may not get off. It is a long way to come.

I wish you would give my love to Doctor Cate — I was about to say "when you see him," but you never see anybody! Perhaps however you have improved. I send back the little baby face to tell you that I had not "averted" my face — only the habit of speaking. It is an earnest and good little face: your brother's child I presume. — Will you ask Mrs. Dickinson some day, if she still hears from Jane Goodenow — I would like very much to know where and how she is. Goodbye —

Always cordially yours —
Helen Jackson

On her October visit Mrs. Jackson pursued her effort to secure a poem. From Hartford, Connecticut, where she and Mr. Jackson were sojourning at the home of Charles Dudley Warner, she wrote on 25 October, the day following her Amherst visit, the following note, pressing her request.

573b

My dear Friend —

Here comes the line I promised to send — we had a fine noon on Mt. Holyoke yesterday — and took the 5 o clk train to Springfield —; but there, Mr. Jackson found a telegram from New York which compelled him to go on without stopping here — and so I came alone to Mr. Warners, which was a disappointment.

Now — will you send me the poem? No — will you let me send the "Success" — which I know by heart — to Roberts Bros for the Masque of Poets? If you will, it will give me a great pleasure. I ask it as a personal favor to myself — Can you refuse the only thing I perhaps shall ever ask at your hands?

Yours ever
Helen Jackson

ED must have granted permission, for Mrs. Jackson wrote the following letter, dated Colorado Springs, 8 December 1878:

573c

My dear friend,

I suppose by this time you have seen the Masque of Poets. I hope you have not regretted giving me that choice bit of verse for it. I was pleased to see that it had in a manner, a special place, being chosen to end the first part of the volume, — on the whole, the volume is a disappointment to me. Still I think it has much interest for all literary people. I confess myself quite unable to conjecture the authorship of most of the poems.

Colorado is as lovely as ever: — our mountains are white with snow now, but there is no snow in the town: at noon one can have windows open, if the fires blaze well on the hearths. What would you think of that in N. England.

I am very glad that I saw you this autumn: also that you saw my husband and liked him, as I perceived that you did –

Thank you once more for the verses.

Yours always
Helen Jackson

The story of the publishing of "Success" comes to an end with the following letter (HCL), written to ED by Thomas Niles, the publisher of Roberts Brothers. It is dated 15 January 1879, and was a reply to one from ED, written to thank him for a copy of *A Masque of Poets*.

573d

Dear Miss Dickinson

You were entitled to a copy of "A Masque of Poets" without thanks, for your valuable contribution which for want of a known sponsor Mr Emerson has generally had to father.

I wanted to send you a proof of your poem, wh. as you have doubtless perceived was slightly changed in phraseology

Yrs very truly
T. Niles

Typical of the reviews of *A Masque of Poets* which attributed "Success" to Emerson is that which appeared in the influential *Literary World*, 10

December 1878 (IX, 118): "If anything in the volume was contributed by Emerson, we should consider these lines upon 'Success' most probably his." And the comment is followed with a quotation of the whole poem.

574

To T. W. Higginson *early November 1878*

Dear friend,

It was joyful that you came – I saw the Steamer's name – though saddened to me by Mother's illness – who broke her Hip in June – soon after I wrote you and was since helpless – It was thought for many weeks she must die, but she has grown easier, though not of power to lift her Head for a Glass of Water.–

I missed yourself and Mr Bowles, and without a Father, seemed even vaster than before. To see you would be almost Hope – I had a sweet Forenoon with Mrs Jackson recently, who brought her Husband to me for the first time – I hope that you are strong and refreshed by Travel and ask for you not Peace, for that would be treason to those that sleep, but confiding Patience – To hope with the Imagination is inevitable, but to remember – with it is the most consecrated ecstasy of the Will –

Your Scholar –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 98). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 310–311.
Higginson returned from his trip to Europe in October.

575

To T. W. Higginson *December 1878*

Dear friend,

I heard you had found the Lane to the Indies, Columbus was looking for –

There is no one so happy her Master is happy as his grateful Pupil. The most noble congratulation it ever befell me to offer – is that you are yourself.

Till it has loved – no man or woman can become itself – Of our first Creation we are unconscious –

We knew not that we were to live –
Nor when – we are to die –
Our ignorance – our Cuirass is –
We wear Mortality
As lightly as an Option Gown
Till asked to take it off –
By his intrusion, God is known –
It is the same with Life –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 99). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1931) 312.
The *Springfield Republican* on 1 December 1878 carried the announcement of Higginson's engagement to Mary Potter Thacher of Newton.

576

To Mrs. Henry Hills *Christmas 1878*

With sweet Christmas for the "little Brethren and Sisters of the mystic tie" –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text has the same provenance as that of letter no. 376.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 397; *L* (1931) 386.

577

To Martha Gilbert Smith *late December 1878*

Mattie –

A faithful "I am sorry" will sometimes save the Heart – when every other Savior fails – I want to take hold of your Hand and tell you that Love lasts – though it grows unknown – in some dreadful instants –

We are eternal – dear, which seems so worthless, now – but will be by and by, all we can remember – because it owns our own and must give them back –

The Noble cannot go from Home – and your friend was noble –

When you have seen him, dear, as you certainly will – these moments will change –

I am glad of your little Girl – She will be a Balm – and remember the Boy and Girl that are with their Father –

What an anticipation!

Smile – for their sake, dear, to whom you have added a "Father in Heaven" –

To me the word grew fond since I gave my own –

Lovingly,
Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 31). Pencil. Envelope addressed: Mrs. J. W. Smith-/Geneva-/New York.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 253, in part.

John Williams Smith died, 2 December 1878. An infant son, Frank, had died, 14 June 1861; and a daughter Susan, on 3 November 1865.

578

To Mrs. A. B. H. Davis *late 1878?*

Dear friends,

We are snatching our jewels from the frost, and ask you to help us wear them, as also the trinkets more rotund, which serve a baser need.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 397; *L* (1931) 386.

Mrs. Todd placed the letter among those written about 1878, with the note: "On sending flowers and apples to Mrs. Davis and her daughter."

579

To Mrs. William H. Dickinson *late 1878*

The sweet anniversary was not unheeded – nor that dear later Day which you and Willie have kept with us – Death has only to touch a

trifle to make it portentous (stupendous) – though a Past that is [sweet is] true has a calmed Pang – I am sure it will grieve you that Prof Lewes has died – for the Light of your home with Willie – will [teach] show you how dark (dim) – [where] it goes out – The dying of an ideal is more dreadful than that of a Person because it includes besides the decease of a Pageant which [except] to [ourself never existed] – trust – guess – to us only existed Willie and his glasses are a pathetic Fiction (picture –) [John Anderson indeed is near] if they dont prevent his seeing his friends – I can tolerate them Memory's sweet eyes – I could not be balked by – I gave your message to mother which seemed to cheer her very much she grows dependent on dear words as the sick (sad) do I was sorry I could not write before and hope you will not think wrongly of it

I give my love which is most (newest –) new venerable times – and am fondly Willies and yours –

warmly
[newest –]
venerable times –

Manuscript: AC. Penciled rough draft.
Publication: *NEQ* XXVIII (1955) 300–301.
Words crossed out are in brackets; alternative suggestions in parentheses.
The philosopher and critic George Henry Lewes, lifelong companion of George Eliot, died, 28 November 1878.

580

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1878*

The Solaces of Theft are first – Theft – second – Superiority to Detection –

Emily.

Manuscript: HCL (B 9). Pencil. Addressed on fold: Susan.
Publication: *AM* CXV (1915) 39; *LL* 61.
This and the following seven messages sent to Susan Dickinson are in the handwriting of about 1878. The circumstances connected with them are not known, though it is possible that this letter may refer to Ned (see letter no. 571).

581

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1878*

I must wait a few Days before seeing you – You are too momentous. But remember it is idolatry, not indifference.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 181). Pencil. Envelope addressed: Susan.
PUBLICATION: *LL* 57.

582

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1878*

I can defeat the rest, but you defeat me, Susan –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 129). Pencil. Addressed on fold: Mrs. Dickinson.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 269.

583

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1878*

Susan –

Whoever blesses, you always bless – the last – and often made the Heaven of Heavens – a sterile stimulus.

Cherish Power – dear –

Remember that stands in the Bible between the Kingdom and the Glory, because it is wilder than either of them.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 37). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *LL* 62, in part.

584

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1878*

Sue – to be lovely as you is a touching Contest, though like the Siege of Eden, impracticable – Eden never capitulates –

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 50). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 264, with facsimile reproduction.

585

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1878*

Susan – I dreamed of you, last night, and send a Carnation to indorse it –

Sister of Ophir –
Ah Peru –
Subtle the Sum
That purchase you –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 32). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *LL* 79; *FF* 243.

586

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1878*

Susan –

The sweetest acts both exact and defy, gratitude, so silence is all the honor there is – but to those who can estimate silence, it is sweetly enough –

In a Life that stopped guessing, you and I should not feel at home –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 55): Pencil. Lower part of sheet torn away.
PUBLICATION: *LL* 62; *FF* 255.

587

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1878*

To the faithful Absence is condensed presence.
To others – but there *are* no others –

MANUSCRIPT: YUL. Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *AM* CXV (1915) 37; *LL* 57.

588

To Mrs. Edward Tuckerman *January 1879*

Your coming is a symptom of Summer – The Symptom excels the malady.

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 383; *L* (1931) 372.
The handwriting is of this period. On Mrs. Tuckerman's authority Mrs. Todd dated it January 1879. Perhaps Mrs. Tuckerman had made a New Year's call.

589

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *early January 1879*

The lovely little Bronzes in the Lace House – came just as I had written you –

The deference to my predilection pleased and smote me too.

I am glad you are not hung – like the "Mollie Maguires," tho' doubtless heinous as themselves – in a sweet way –

Austin's Baby says when surprised by statements – "There's – *sumthn* – else – there's – *Bumbul* – Beese."

God's little Blond Blessing – we have long deemed you, and hope his so called "Will" – will not compel him to revoke you.

The "rectification of his Frontier," costs the Earth too much –

Vinnie and I watch Mother, which makes the Days too short – till we wear the same Heart – Day and Night, and wash our Hand with our Tongue as the Pussy does – I shall not write again for a few moments, which will defray your cares – Vinnie wants to write, but was it "Atlas'" fault the World was on his Shoulders?

Mother and Sister give their love, and let my own preponderate –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 50). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *LH* 128–129.
Members of the "Mollie Maguires," a secret organization of Irish miners in Pennsylvania, were hanged for various outrages on four occasions between June 1877 and 14 January 1879. This letter, thanking Mrs.

Holland for her annual Christmas gift of a box of chocolates, may have been written in mid-January. The "rectification of his Frontier" was a phrase used by Beaconsfield in a speech on Lord Mayor's Day, November 1878, and refers to India's northwest frontier.

590

To Samuel Bowles the younger *January 1879*

Coveting the power to send your Father a Flower – ignorant, hallowed be his name, of his route of Down – reverence for sorrow, if not profanation, may we also offer you?

MANUSCRIPT: Bowles. Pencil. Unpublished.

This seems to have been written on the first anniversary of the elder Bowles's death, 16 January.

591

To Maria Whitney *early 1879?*

Dear Friend,

Your touching suggestion . . . is a tender permission. . . .

We cannot believe for each other – thought is too sacred a despot, but I hope that God, in whatever form, is true to our friend. . . . Consciousness is the only home of which we *now* know. That sunny adverb had been enough, were it not foreclosed.

When not inconvenient to your heart, please remember us, and let us help you carry it, if you grow tired. Though we are each unknown to ourself and each other, 'tis not what well conferred it, the dying soldier asks, it is only the water.

Emily

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 339; *LL* 319–320; *L* (1931) 328–329.

Mrs. Todd dated the letter 1879. Quite possibly it was written at about the same time as the letter preceding. Mrs. Todd says in a footnote that following the letter is the poem beginning "We knew not that we were to live" (see letter no. 575).

592

To Mrs. Jonathan L. Jenkins *late January 1879*

Would you feel more at Home with a Flower from Home, in your Hand, dear?

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (L 39). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 364; *L* (1931) 364; *FN* 123.
Probably this note was sent on the occasion of the birth of Austin Dickinson Jenkins, 19 January 1879.

593

To T. W. Higginson *February 1879*

Dear friend,

To congratulate the Redeemed is perhaps superfluous for Redemption leaves nothing for Earth to add – It is very sweet and serious to suppose you at Home, and reverence I cannot express is all that remains – I have read of Home in the Revelations —— "Neither thirst any more" –

You speak very sweetly of the Stranger –

I trust the Phantom Love that enrolls the "Sparrow" – enfolds her softer than a Child –

The name of the "little Book she wrote," I do not quite decipher – "– and Prairie"? Should you perhaps tell me, I think I could see her Face in that – I am sorry not to have seen your "Hawthorne," but have known little of Literature since my Father died – that and the passing of Mr Bowles, and Mother's hopeless illness, overwhelmed my Moments, though your Pages and Shakespeare's, like Ophir – remain –

To see you seems improbable, but the Clergyman says I shall see my Father –

The subterranean stays –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL – the first two pages; and BPL (Higg 117) – the last two pages. Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *AM* CXXXIX (June 1927) 800; *L* (1931) 312–313.
Higginson's marriage to Mary Potter Thacher took place during the first week in February, 1879. The book she had written and to which he had

alluded was a small collection of discursive essays, *Seashore and Prairie*, published in 1877. Higginson's *Short Studies of American Authors*, which contains a brief estimate of Hawthorne, Higginson sent to ED as soon as it was published, but it had not yet been written (see letter no. 622). He had published two earlier essays on Hawthorne: "An Evening with Mrs. Hawthorne," *Atlantic Monthly*, XXVIII (October 1871), 432–433; and "Hawthorne's Last Bequest," *Scribner's Monthly*, V (November 1872), 100–105. He had evidently alluded to one of these, probably to the second, since it deals more directly with Hawthorne. The quotation in the first paragraph is from Revelation 7.16: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. . ."

594

To Mrs. Henry Hills *1879?*

Our gentle Neighbor must have known that we did not know she was ill, or we should immediately have enquired for her.

Emily and Sister.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text of this letter and of the four that follow, written to Mrs. Hills presumably between the first of the year and Easter, have the same provenance as that of letter no. 376. Mrs. Todd dated this one "January 1879?."

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 397; *L* (1931) 386.

595

To Mrs. Henry Hills *1879?*

"Come unto me." Beloved Commandment. The Darling obeyed.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 398; *L* (1931) 387.

An infant, Samuel, died, 23 February, 1879.

596

To Mrs. Henry Hills *1879?*

The power to console is not within corporeal reach – though its' attempt, is precious.

To die before it feared to die, may have been a boon —

MANUSCRIPT: missing. Addressed on the fold: Mrs Henry Hills.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 398; *LL* 322; *L* (1931) 387.
This note perhaps soon followed the preceding.

597

To Mrs. Henry Hills *1879?*

Dear friend,

The only Balmless Wound is the departed Human Life we had learned to need.

For that, even Immortality is a slow solace. All other Peace has many Roots and will spring again.

With cheer from one who knows.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 398; *LL* 322; *L* (1931) 387.

598

To Mrs. Henry Hills *1879?*

Dear friend,

The Gift was sadly exquisite. Were the actual "Cross" so divinely adorned, we should covet it.

Thank you for the sacred "flowers" — typical, both of them.

Gethsemene and Cana are still a traveled route.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 399; *L* (1931) 387–388.
Easter in 1879 fell on 13 April. This note evidently acknowledges an Easter gift.

599

To Mrs. Henry Hills *about 1879*

Sweet Mrs Hills.

We think of you and know you think of us.
To come – from Heaven – is casual – but to return – eternal.
Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: Jones Library. Pencil. Envelope addressed: Mrs Henry Hills. Unpublished. The date is conjectured from the handwriting.

This may also have been an Easter note, perhaps sent just before the preceding, and accompanying flowers for Mrs. Hills, appropriate to the season and to the memory of the child Samuel.

600

To Otis P. Lord *about 1879*

. . . You spoke of "Hope" surpassing "Home" – I thought that Hope *was* Home – a misapprehension of Architecture – but then if I knew . . .

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *Revelation* 88.
It is a fragment seemingly clipped from a letter or draft of a letter.

601

To Helen Hunt Jackson *about mid-April 1879*

Spurn the temerity –
Rashness of Calvary –
Gay were Gethsemene
Knew we of Thee –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (Higginson). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *AM* CXXXIX (June 1927) 801; *L* (1931) 318; *Poems* (1955) 992.

This may have been an Easter greeting and a reminder to Mrs. Jackson that ED has not recently heard from her. At the bottom of the sheet Mrs. Jackson wrote: "Wonderful twelve words! – H. J.," and evidently sent the message to Higginson, for it now rests among his papers. Mrs. Jackson wrote the following letter (HCL) to ED, dated Colorado Springs, 12 May 1879:

601a

My dear friend,

I know your "Blue bird" by heart – and that is more than I do of any of my own verses. –

I also want your permission to send it to Col. Higginson to read. These two things are my testimonial to its merit.

We have blue birds here – I might have had the sense to write something about one myself, but I never did: and now I never can. For which I am inclined to envy, and perhaps hate you.

"The man I live with" (I suppose you recollect designating my husband by that curiously direct phrase) is in New York, – and I am living alone, – which I should find very insupportable except that I am building on a bath room, & otherwise setting my house to rights. To be busy is the best help I know of, for all sorts of discomforts. –

What should you think of trying your hand on the oriole? He will be along presently

Yours ever –

Helen Jackson

P.S. Write & tell me if I may pass the Blue Bird along to the Col? –

602

To Helen Hunt Jackson *1879*

Dear friend,

To the Oriole you suggested I add a Humming Bird and hope they are not untrue –

A Route of Evanescence
With a revolving Wheel
A Resonance of Emerald
A Rush of Cochineal
And every Blossom on the Bush
Adjusts it's tumbled Head –
The Mail from Tunis, probably,
An easy Morning's Ride.

PUBLICATION: AC. Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *Poems* (1955) 1011.

The "Blue bird" which Mrs. Jackson knew was probably "Before you thought of Spring." The poem ED wrote on the oriole begins: "One of the ones that Midas touched."

603

To Edward (Ned) Dickinson *about 1879*

Ned –

Belshazzar had a Letter –
He never had but one –
Belshazzar's Correspondent
Concluded and begun
In that immortal Copy
The Conscience of us all
Can read without it's Glasses
On Revelation's Wall –

———

Suggested by our Neighbor –

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 196). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *Poems* (1955) 1008–1009.

This and the following two notes, sent to Ned, were written about 1879. The above may refer to the Lothrop case, settled in April 1879. The case is outlined in *Poems* (1955) 1006.

604

To Edward (Ned) Dickinson *about 1879*

Ned –

Time's wily Chargers will not wait
At any Gate but Woe's –
But there – so gloat to hesitate
They will not stir for blows –

Dick –
Jim –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 45). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 251; *Poems* (1955) 1008.

Mrs. Bianchi's note in *FF* says the lines were sent after Ned's horses Dick and Jim had run away with him. The verses, however, would seem more appropriate to an occasion when Ned inadvertently found himself in a funeral procession from which he could not extricate himself by whipping up the horses.

605

To Edward (Ned) Dickinson *about 1879*

Dear Ned –

Dennis was happy yesterday, and it made him graceful – I saw him waltzing with the Cow – and suspected his status, but he afterward started for your House in a frame that was unmistakable –

You told me he had'nt tasted Liquor since his Wife's decease – then she must have been living at six o'clock last Evening –

I fear for the rectitude of the Barn –

Love for the Police –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 130). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *LL* 55, in part; *New World Writing* (Third Mentor Selection) May 1953, 260, entire except for the last line.

Dennis Scannell was a gardener and handyman. His wife had died in September 1876. See letter no. 616 and Appendix 2.

606

To Mrs. James S. Cooper *about 1879*

Dear friend,

It distressed us that you were pained –

Are you easier now?

You have sheltered our tears too often – that your's should fall unsolaced –

Give us half the Thorn – then it will tear you less – To divulge itself is Sorrow's Right – never – its presumption.

Faithfully,
E. Dickinson

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 396–397; *LL* 335, in part; *L* (1931) 385.

This and the following two notes, sent to Mrs. Cooper, are in the handwriting of about 1879.

607

To Mrs. James S. Cooper *about 1879*

Is sickness pathos or infamy?

While you forget to decide, please confirm this trifle.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text derives from a transcript probably made by Mrs. Frederick Tuckerman, in the possession of Mr. Orton Clark.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 394; *LL* 324; *L* (1931) 383.

608

To Mrs. James S. Cooper *about 1879*

"Give me thine Heart" is too peremptory a Courtship for Earth, however irresistible in Heaven –

MANUSCRIPT: AC. Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 395; *LL* 334; *L* (1931) 384.

The quotation is from Proverbs 23.26: "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."

609

To Mrs. Samuel Bowles *1879?*

How lovely to remember! How tenderly they told of you! Sweet toil for smitten hands to console the smitten!

Labors as endeared may engross our lost. Buds of other days quivered in remembrance. Hearts of other days lent their solemn charm.

Life of flowers lain in flowers – what a home of dew! And the bough of ivy; was it as you said? Shall I plant it softly?

There were little feet, white as alabaster.

Dare I chill them with the soil?

Nature is our eldest mother, she will do no harm.

Let the phantom love that enrolls the sparrow shield you softer than a child.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 225–226; *LL* 316–317; *L* (1931) 211.

Mrs. Todd dated the letter 1879. It may be a message to thank Mrs. Bowles for flowers and a cutting of ivy which had some association with Samuel Bowles. The last sentence echoes one in letter no. 593.

610

To Louise and Frances Norcross *early July 1879*

Dear Cousins,

Did you know there had been a fire here, and that but for a whim of the wind Austin and Vinnie and Emily would have all been homeless? But perhaps you saw *The Republican.*

We were waked by the ticking of the bells, – the bells tick in Amherst for a fire, to tell the firemen.

I sprang to the window, and each side of the curtain saw that awful sun. The moon was shining high at the time, and the birds singing like trumpets.

Vinnie came soft as a moccasin, "Don't be afraid, Emily, it is only the fourth of July."

I did not tell that I saw it, for I thought if she felt it best to deceive, it must be that it was.

She took hold of my hand and led me into mother's room. Mother had not waked, and Maggie was sitting by her. Vinnie left us a moment, and I whispered to Maggie, and asked her what it was.

"Only Stebbins's barn, Emily;" but I knew that the right and left of the village was on the arm of Stebbins's barn. I could hear buildings falling, and oil exploding, and people walking and talking gayly, and cannon soft as velvet from parishes that did not know that we were burning up.

And so much lighter than day was it, that I saw a caterpillar measure a leaf far down in the orchard; and Vinnie kept saying bravely, "It's only the fourth of July."

It seemed like a theatre, or a night in London, or perhaps like chaos. The innocent dew falling "as if it thought no evil," . . . and sweet frogs prattling in the pools as if there were no earth.

At seven people came to tell us that the fire was stopped, stopped by throwing sound houses in as one fills a well.

Mother never waked, and we were all grateful; we knew she would never buy needle and thread at Mr. Cutler's store, and if it were Pompeii nobody could tell her.

The post-office is in the old meeting-house where Loo and I went early to avoid the crowd, and – fell asleep with the bumble-bees and the Lord God of Elijah.

Vinnie's "only the fourth of July" I shall always remember. I think she will tell us so when we die, to keep us from being afraid.

Footlights cannot improve the grave, only immortality.

Forgive me the personality; but I knew, I thought, our peril was yours.

Love for you each.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: destroyed.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 284–285; *LL* 320–321; *L* (1931) 258–259.

The fire that started in the early morning of 4 July 1879 gutted the business center of Amherst.

611

To Mrs. Edward Tuckerman *September 1879*

Should dear Mrs Tuckerman have no Pears like mine, I should never cease to be harrowed –

Should she, that also would be dismay –

I incur the peril –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: AAS. Pencil. Endorsed by Mrs. Tuckerman: September 1879.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 383; *L* (1931) 372–373.

612

To Mrs. William A. Stearns *1879?*

Dear Friends,

I hope no bolder lover brought you the first pond lilies. The water is deeper than the land. The swimmer never stagnates.

I shall bring you a handful of lotus next, but do not tell the Nile. He is a jealous brook.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 379; *LL* 297; *L* (1931) 369.

This and the following note sent to Mrs Stearns, Mrs. Todd thought might have been written in 1879.

613

To Mrs. William A. Stearns *1879?*

"A little flower, a faded flower, the gift of one who cared for me." Please usurp the pronoun.

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 379; *LL* 297; *L* (1931) 369.

614

To Mrs. Henry Hills *1879?*

Vocal is but one form of remembrance, dear friend. The cherishing that is speechless, is equally warm.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text has the same provenance as that of letter no. 376.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 400; *L* (1931) 389.

615

To Mrs. Henry Hills *1879?*

"Babes in the Wood." [*outside*]
Berries [*inside*]

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text has the same provenance as that of letter no. 376. Unpublished. The date of this note and the one that precedes it is very uncertain.

616

To Mrs. John Dole *about 1879*

Dear friend,

Had I known of Vinnie's inquiry, I should have dispelled it –

Dennis' constancy *here* – is impregnable, but obloquy out of sight is one of Vinnie's spectres – I dont remember meeting "the Lines," though they fall like Tennyson – The Parents of Beauty are seldom known – I hope you may fast grow stronger – and only recall the Sickness, as a bad Dream – Night's capacity varies, but Morning, is inevitable –

E. Dickinson –

MANUSCRIPT: Jones Library. Pencil. Unpublished.

The date is conjectured from the handwriting. The reference to Dennis Scannell may be explained in letter no. 605.

617

To Forrest F. Emerson *1879?*

Though tendered by a stranger, the fruit will be forgiven.
Valor in the dark is my Maker's code.

E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 403; *LL* 333; *L* (1931) 392.

Emerson was installed as pastor of the First Church in June 1879. Mrs. Todd placed it early among the notes to Emerson. The signature is formal, yet ED thanks him for a gift of fruit and hints that a call will be appreciated. The gift may have been for Mrs. Dickinson, now bedridden, who may have expressed the wish to have her pastor call.

618

To Forrest F. Emerson *1879?*

Mother congratulates Mr. Emerson on the discovery of the "philosopher's stone." She will never divulge it. It lay just where she thought it did — in making others happy.

E. Dickinson.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 403; *L* (1931) 393.

The tone of this note suggests that it was written shortly after that above. Emerson has done something which Mrs. Dickinson appreciates and ED acknowledges; quite possibly he paid a call.

619

To Mrs. J. G. Holland *October 1879*

Little Sister,

I was glad you wrote – I was just about addressing the Coroner of Alexandria — You spared me the melancholy research –

Are you pretty well – have you been happy –

Are your Eyes safe?

A thousand questions rise to my lips, and as suddenly ebb – for how little I know of you recently — An awkward loneliness smites me – I fear I must ask with Mr Wentworth, "Where are our moral foundations?"

Should you ask what had happened here, I should say nothing perceptible. Sweet latent events – too shy to confide –

It will vivify us to your remembrance to tell you that Austin and Sue have just returned from Belchertown Cattle Show –

Austin brought me a Balloon and Vinnie a Watermelon and each of his family a Whip – Wasn't it primitive?

When they drove away in the dust this morning, I told them they looked like Mr and Mrs "Pendexter," turning their backs upon Longfellow's Parish –

Brave Vinnie is well – Mother does not yet stand alone and fears she never shall walk, but I tell her we all shall fly so soon, not to let it grieve her, and what indeed is Earth but a Nest, from whose rim we are all falling?

One day last Summer I laughed once like "Little Mrs Holland," Vinnie said I did – how much it pleased us all –

I ask you to ask your Doctor will he be so kind as to write the name of my Philadelphia friend on the Note within, and your little Hand will take it to him –

You were so long so faithful, Earth would not seem homelike without your little sunny Acts –

Love for you each –

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (H 51). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *LH* 129–130.

The Belchertown Cattle Show took place on 9 October 1879. Mr. Wentworth is a character in Henry James's *The Europeans,* serialized at this time in *Scribner's Monthly*. Mr. Pendexter is a character in Longfellow's *Kavanagh.*

620

To Perez Cowan *November 1879*

Will it comfort my grieved cousin to know that Emily and Vinnie are among the ones this moment thinking of him with peculiar tenderness, and is his sweet wife too faint to remember to Whom her loved one is consigned?

"Come unto me" could not alarm those minute feet – how sweet to remember.

If you feel able, write a few words; if you do not – remember forgetting is a guile unknown to your faithful cousin

Emily.

MANUSCRIPT: missing.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 334; *L* (1931) 323.
Cowan's daughter Margaret died, 8 November 1879.

621

To T. W. Higginson *about 1879*

Must I lose the Friend that saved my Life, without inquiring why?

Affection gropes through Drifts of Awe – for his Tropic Door – That every Bliss we know or guess – hourly befall him – is his scholar's prayer ——

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 104). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 327; *LL* 306; *L* (1931) 309.
The handwriting is that of 1879. The two datable letters written during the year are in February and December (nos. 593 and 622). This one evidently was written to remind Higginson that a reply to her February letter was overdue. For the reference to him as the friend who had saved her life, see the letter she wrote him ten years earlier (no. 330). For a similar concluding sentence, see letter no. 537.

622

To T. W. Higginson *December 1879*

Dear friend,

Brabantio's Gift was not more fair than your's, though I trust without his pathetic inscription – "Which but thou hast already, with all my Heart I would keep from thee" – Of Poe, I know too little to think – Hawthorne appalls, entices –

Mrs Jackson soars to your estimate lawfully as a Bird, but of Howells and James, one hesitates – Your relentless Music dooms as it redeems –

Remorse for the brevity of a Book is a rare emotion, though fair as Lowell's "Sweet Despair" in the Slipper Hymn –

One thing of it we borrow
And promise to return –
The Booty and the Sorrow
It's Sweetness to have known –
One thing of it we covet –
The power to forget –
The Anguish of the Avarice
Defrays the Dross of it –

Had I tried before reading your Gift, to thank you, it had perhaps been possible, but I waited and now it disables my Lips –

Magic, as it electrifies, also makes decrepit – Thank you for thinking of me –

Your Scholar –

MANUSCRIPT: BPL (Higg 109). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 329; *LL* 318–319; *L* (1931) 313.

Higginson's *Short Studies of American Authors*, advertised as a holiday book, was published shortly before Christmas, priced at fifty cents. It contained brief critical sketches of Hawthorne, Poe, Thoreau, Howells, Helen Hunt Jackson, and Henry James. The lines from *Othello*, I, iii, 194–195, are also in letter no. 538. The allusion to Lowell's "Sweet Despair" in his "Slipper Hymn" must surely have mystified Higginson as it perhaps was intended to do. Yet it clearly refers to the sixth and the last stanzas of Lowell's *After the Burial*:

To the spirit its splendid conjectures,
To the flesh its sweet despair,
Its tears o'er the thin-worn locket
With its anguish of deathless hair!

That little shoe in the corner,
So worn and wrinkled and brown,
With its emptiness confutes you,
And argues your wisdom down.

623

To Mrs. Henry Hills *after Christmas 1879*

Dear friend,

I think Heaven will not be as good as earth, unless it bring with it that sweet power to remember, which is the Staple of Heaven – here. How can we thank each other, when omnipotent?

You, who endear our mortal Christmas, will perhaps assure us.

E.

MANUSCRIPT: missing. The text has the same provenance as that of letter no. 376.

PUBLICATION: *L* (1894) 399; *L* (1931) 388, dated: Christmas, 1879.

Mrs. Hills annually sent Christmas remembrances. The fervor of the acknowledgment may suggest the pleasure which Mrs. Dickinson now took in such events.

624

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1879*

So sorry for Sister's hardships – "Make me thy wrack when I come back, but spare me when I gang."

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 169). Pencil.

PUBLICATION: *FF* 240.

This and the following two notes, sent to Susan Dickinson, are in the handwriting of about 1879.

625

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1879*

Emily is sorry for Susan's Day –
To be singular under plural circumstances, is a becoming heroism –

Opinion is a flitting thing,
But Truth, outlasts the Sun –
If then we cannot own them both –
Possess the oldest one –

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 26). Pencil. Addressed: Susan.
PUBLICATION: *LL* 62, prose part only.

626

To Susan Gilbert Dickinson *about 1879*

Mrs Delmonico's things were very nice – Art has a "Palate," as well as an Easel –

Susan breaks many Commandments, but *one* she obeys – "Whatsoever ye do, do it unto the Glory" –

Susan will be saved –

Thank her –

Emily –

MANUSCRIPT: HCL (B 48). Pencil.
PUBLICATION: *FF* 243.

Many notes written at this time suggest that ED is acknowledging thoughtful attentions which friends and members of the family are trying to show Mrs. Dickinson. Delmonico's was a fashionable New York restaurant. The quotation draws on 1 Corinthians 10.31: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

OLD WESTBURY LIBRARY

OLD WESTBURY LIBRARY

NYIT LIBRARIES
PS1541.Z5 A3 1958 v1-3
Dickinson, Emily, 1830-18 010101 000
The letters of Emily Dickinson
0 1954 0032860 3

PS1541.Z5A3 1958 v.2 c.1
Dickinson, Emily
The letters of Emily
Dickinson.

MAY 3 1999 Mathew 0027

PS1541.Z5A3 1958 v.2 c.1
Dickinson, Emily
The letters of Emily
Dickinson.

OLD WESTBURY LIBRARY

NEW YORK INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY

(2)